

# MIENNONITE

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*Chateau Gombervaux  
on the Kennel farm,  
near Vaucouleurs,  
France. Credit: Huguette  
Chambre*

## Telling a Story That Has Told Me

**By Ron Kennel**

Stories have an impact on those who hear them. Stories also have an impact on those who tell them.

This is certainly true for the great biblical story of salvation. That story is told to evoke obedience and faith in God for those who hear it (Ps. 78:1-8; Luke 1:1-4; Rom. 1:1-6) and for those who tell it (Deut. 26:1-19; Ps. 96; 1 Cor. 11:23-34).

I found this to be true, also, for a small, recent chapter of God's great story of salvation—the story of my

great-grandfather, Peter Kennel, Sr.

My father, Lester Kennel, who faintly remembers Great-Grandpa, was the first to tell me about him. He told me that Great-Grandpa came from France. So when in elementary school I was asked about my family's nationality, I proudly said, "French!" as though Great-Grandpa was my *only* ancestor. I was unaware that his roots were actually Swiss and German. Dad told me how Great-Grandpa had been a highly respected bishop of our Salem Mennonite Church, near Shickley, Nebraska. This reinforced

my identification with ministers such as my grandfather, Peter Kennel, Jr.; my uncle, LeRoy Kennel; and others. I felt as though I belonged to a family of church leaders. Dad told me that if I thought he (Dad) was strict in his discipline of me, Grandpa had been stricter, and Great-Grandpa had been stricter yet! This created in me a sense of awe and fascination with Great-Grandpa. Dad also told me that Great-Grandpa was a good manager, a hard worker, and that his motto was "Idleness is a curse." This reinforced within me the value



of hard work and good management, which Dad and other Kennel family members had modeled.

The images Dad gave me were later confirmed by what Grandpa told me. Grandpa showed me pictures of his parents, grandmother, uncles, and aunt. Their faces seemed attractive and dignified. It is understandable then, that years later (1966) when I was taking J. C. Wenger's Mennonite history course at seminary, I chose to write about Peter Kennel, Sr.

In this project I was transformed from a story-hearer to a story-teller. I felt I was doing something very significant. I was saving a story from obscurity by writing it down.

I started by learning more of the story. I read conference and church records. I interviewed Grandpa Kennel, great-uncles, and other church leaders who had known Great-Grandpa. How excited I was when I held in my hand Great-Grandpa's passport, other vital papers, his Bibles, and his sermon notes! The excitement of primary research made this paper the most enjoyable writing project I had ever undertaken.

I learned many new things about Great-Grandpa. He was the only one of his family to migrate to North America. The stated reason was to escape military service. He could speak three languages. He was a good preacher and a highly respected bishop. As a leader he was progressive, yet he remained committed to Anabaptist-Mennonite perspec-

tives. His children respected him. In addition to his church work, he was a successful farmer and won the respect of the local banker, who used Great-Grandpa as a consultant. He was clear and direct in his communication. He expressed his faith in his daily life. He was energetic and engaging. He walked swiftly, as I do.

The more I learned about him, the more I liked him. I began to feel as though I knew him personally. In all my research I came upon little negative information about him. Consequently, the story I wrote was complimentary and idealistic. Nevertheless, in J. C. Wenger's estimation, it was good enough for an "A."

Believing that I had produced something worth sharing, I made copies and distributed them to others in the family. One of these was Lloyd Troyer, Jr., the son of Great-Grandpa's only daughter, Emma. In 1967, after he and his wife, Erma, attended Mennonite World Conference in Amsterdam, they visited France to try to locate and to reconnect with our European cousins. This was an important mission, since contact with them had been broken when Great-Grandpa died in 1923. They took with them a copy of my paper on Great-Grandpa. After an unsuccessful search, they left their copy of my paper at Bienenberg Bible School in Liestal, Switzerland.

In 1969, about two weeks before they were scheduled to leave for Kenya, Africa, to visit their daugh-



*Peter Kennel's passport photo, age 19.  
Credit: Ron Kennel*

ter and son-in-law, Lloyd and Erma received a once-in-a-life-time letter. It was from a French Mennonite minister named Andre Goll. Goll reported that his job was to visit all the French-speaking Mennonite families in France. He had heard of the Troyers' unsuccessful search in 1967 and had found my paper on Peter Kennel, Sr. at Bienenberg. And, most exciting of all, he had located our relatives in the city of Toul, in eastern France!

Needless to say, Lloyd and Erma immediately changed their itinerary to include a stop in France. They met Andre Goll, who took them to Toul to meet the relatives he had identified. When the Troyers laid out photographs they'd brought

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along of Great-Grandpa, his mother, and siblings, they heard excited exclamations: "This is our grand-mother! These are our uncles! This is our mother!" It was an unforgettable reunion. After 46 years, contact between the two parts of our family had been re-established.

Since that time we have corresponded with our French cousins. Several members of our family in the U.S. have visited them in France. Andre Goll and his family have visited us.

As a result of all these contacts, much new information came to light, which I compiled in a series of papers over several years and distributed to interested family members.

In 1981 a seminary class on family and marital therapy provided me with an opportunity to do additional research on Great-Grandpa from a family systems perspective. I interviewed more people who had known him. While much of what I heard reinforced my liking for him, other things caused me discomfort. The opposition of his siblings to his emigration—especially since he was the oldest son and his mother was a widow—raised questions for me

about the quality of his relationship with them. His directness in communication sometimes seemed insensitive. The disciplining of his children seemed too harsh. His frequent, extended absences from home to attend to his bishop assignment must have placed great strains on Great-Grandma who had borne 10 children. I began to wonder how he and I would have related had we been contemporaries. This new information helped to demythologize him. He seemed more human.

Later that year we were greatly delighted when a French cousin, Robert Guingrich, came to visit us. He was the son of Great-Grandpa's youngest sister, Emelie. Robert was the first Kennel relative from Europe to visit the American Kennels since Great-Grandpa immigrated. What a grand reunion we had! Significantly, that year, 1981, was exactly 100 years after Great-Grandpa had migrated to North America, never to see his family again.

In 1990 the coordinators of our triennial Kennel family reunion asked me to give the Sunday morning meditation. Having become Great-Grandpa's historian, I told his story. I also offered to compile my research and write a new biography. They took me up on the offer.

Immediately I faced a problem. Having just begun a new pastorate, I could not find adequate time to begin this project. Three years later, I had produced nothing. When our next family reunion rolled around, my conscience was troubled. It was not until early 1996 that I managed to block out the time necessary to write this story.

This time my research was primarily rechecking my sources, reviewing what I had already written, and rummaging through my notes. I had

few new sources. I had hoped to find Great-Grandpa's name on the immigrant ship lists on microfilm at the Allen County Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana. But it was not to be. After many tedious hours of searching, I was unable to find his name on any of the ship lists.

## The Challenges

As I worked on this project, I became aware more than ever of the challenges of writing history.

One was a justice challenge. Having been sensitized to women's concerns in recent years, I had learned to appreciate the role of women in Great-Grandpa's story. In my research I had gathered some data on the women in the story, but I wished I had more. Though I focused on Great-Grandpa, I included as much about the women as was available to me.

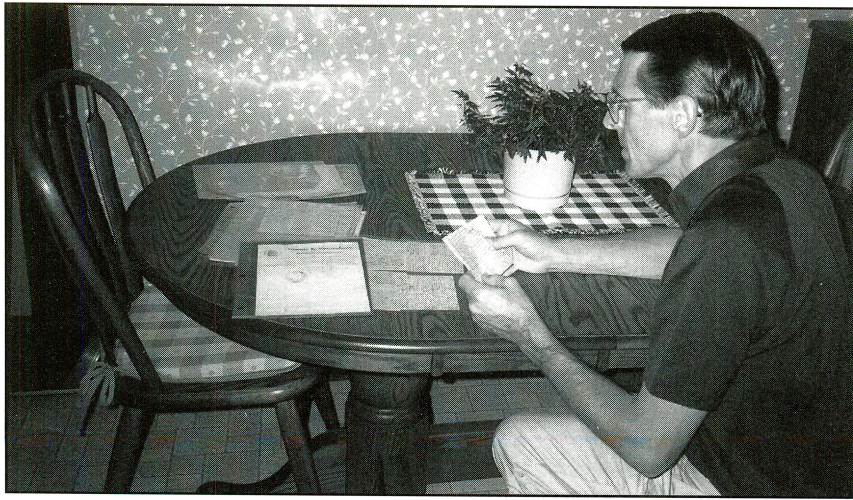
Another challenge was objectivity. In spite of the fact that Great-Grandpa had been somewhat demythologized for me in 1981, I still felt pressured by my earlier idealistic view. Most of the data I had gathered about him was positive. I struggled with what negative information to include and how to present it. I had some anxiety about how it might be received by other members of the family. In a few instances I omitted names of certain family members. I left out one matter entirely—his pipe-smoking—which now would be perceived as negative, but which in Great-Grandpa's time would have been rather insignificant. However, if I had it to do over again, I would include it with appropriate background information.

A third challenge was accuracy. I was glad that in my recent project I was able to correct some inaccuracies in my earlier paper. However, while I had a good deal of reliable data, most of my anecdotal material was based on memory, which can be subjective and historically inaccurate. Where I felt it necessary to reconstruct narrative on the basis of



*Peter and Katie Kennel with son, Christian, 1888 or 1889. Credit: Ron Kennel*





The author with his treasures. Credit: Ron Kennel

historical background, I tried to be as accurate as possible.

A fourth challenge was evenness. Since my data covered some parts of Great-Grandpa's journey more fully than others, and since my resource materials varied in genre from anecdotal to statistical, an unevenness crept into my final draft.

A fifth challenge was clarity of communication. Assuming that not all readers would be aware of the historical contexts of Great-Grandpa's life, I provided some background information. However, I believe that I was not attentive enough to the range of ages and the various educational levels of my potential readers. In some places, I could have used simpler language.

A sixth challenge was unity. In looking for themes, I found several that stood out. One was "migration" and the other "home." Consequently, I decided on the title, *Journey Home*. Were I to do it over again, I would search for a more dynamic title.

Giving glory to God was a seventh challenge. I did not want this project to be ancestor worship. I wanted it to bear witness to Jesus Christ. So I attempted to place it in the context of salvation history. Great-Grandpa's ministry and faith legacy made this a good fit.

As I dealt with these challenges,

it became apparent to me that what I was writing was not simple history or biography. It was more a reflection on a life in the context of God's salvation story. Thus I chose the subtitle, *Peter Kennel, Sr., Reflections on His Life and Times*.

Beside these, I found preparing a book for publication to be a real challenge. Decisions needed to be made about format, layout, size, type, pictures, chapter headings, footnotes, and jacket design. Then, too, there was proofreading. I learned the importance of having other people do the proofreading and that more than one proofreading is essential. I also had to choose a printer. Finally, I had to decide how many copies to print and how much to charge.

By God's grace, the book was completed, and 100 copies were ready for our family reunion in July 1996. It was well received. Since I had done 30 years of research and writing in conversation with the family, and much of my data had been gathered from various family members, this project was really a family project. After I presented it at our reunion, my uncle and mentor, LeRoy Kennel, asked me a question: "What has happened to you, personally, during this project?" I'm still working on an answer. These reflections are a partial answer.

## Hearing and Telling, a Means of Grace

In summary, this project has deepened my sense of roots and identity. It also helped me to become more realistic in my views of ancestors, and, in family systems language, to differentiate myself from my family of origin. Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma's faithfulness to Christ and to the church inspires and encourages me to faithful discipleship. Great-Grandpa's decisions to migrate to North America, to follow Christ, and to serve the church impress on me the significance of such decisions for future generations. I am reminded that it is only by God's grace that I am allowed to benefit from the legacy of my ancestors.

In storyteller John Shea's words, the story I've written has "told me." It has told me about myself. It's a story that I have internalized. Since it is about my family of origin, it is a vital part of my story. Most important, it belongs in God's great story of salvation. Hearing and telling it has been for me a means of grace.

Although I'm no longer preoccupied with it, questions remain. I have only two copies of my book left for distribution. I've found errors that were missed in proofreading. I wonder if the picture I painted of Peter Kennel, Sr. is still too idealistic. I've had second thoughts about the title. What should I do if new information comes to light? Should I prepare a revision? If so, how soon? When is a project like this ever finished?

Perhaps trying to answer this last question is futile. In the final analysis, I know that what I've written is never the final word. The final word is what God has written—about Great-Grandpa Kennel, about me, and about all of us. *P*

—Ron Kennel is pastor of Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.



*This is the first of a new column of stories from history that can be used as illustrations in the pulpit and in the classroom—or for telling and pondering anywhere. Readers are invited to submit stories for this column. Readers whose stories are accepted for publication will earn a free subscription for someone of their choice. Submission should be sent or e-mailed to the editor. —jes*

# To Make a Point: Stories from History for Preaching, Teaching, and Pondering

by John E. Sharp

## When you see *Titanic*, remember Annie Funk

James Cameron's spectacular movie, *Titanic*, has been a gigantic success at the box-office, with sales of \$500 million. Kate Winslet plays the lead role of Rose DeWitt Bukater, a 17-year-old, upper-class American, unhappily engaged to a stifling aristocrat. On the ship she falls in love with a free-spirited steerage passenger, Jack Dawson, played by Leonardo DiCaprio. Romance turns to action, suspense, and tragedy when the *Titanic* sinks. But Cameron ignored the dramatic real-life story of Annie C. Funk, a Mennonite missionary also on board the ill-fated ship.

Annie Funk served as a missionary in the Central Province of India from 1906 to 1915. Her home congregation, the Hereford General Conference Mennonite Church in the Butter Valley of eastern Pennsylvania, had nurtured her interest in missions from the time she was a child. After several state-side assignments, she was called to go overseas. Annie gave an unqualified testimony of her trust in God's care when she answered a friend

who feared for her safety on her first transatlantic voyage: "Our heavenly Father is as near to us on sea as on land. My trust is in him. I have no fear."

Annie's work included the founding and management of a school for girls in Janjgir, India; the school was later renamed in her memory. Her work there was interrupted one day by a telegram that urged her to come home to as soon as possible; it said that her passage was paid. She was not told that her mother was close to death. Annie quickly made travel plans. In her final letter, written somewhere "Near Suez," she worried about what the French would charge for her "excess baggage" on the overland route from Versailles to London. She estimated it would take three more weeks to get back home to Butter Valley, "if the weather and strikes do not prevent" it. When she arrived in Southampton, England, she learned that her ship, the *S.S. Havorford*, would be delayed by a coal strike. She was guided to another ship—a new one called the *Titanic*. Some were saying this was a modern marvel that "God himself couldn't sink." Though it cost more, Annie was



*Annie C. Funk, second-class passenger*

assured that passage on the *Titanic* would get her home in record time. She boarded as a second-class passenger.

The *Titanic* was the White Star Line's proudest accomplishment. No cost had been spared. It was the largest, fastest, most luxurious ship ever built. This highly acclaimed maiden voyage would break all transatlantic speed records. Many luminaries were aboard—in first-class accommodations, of course. The ship's captain, Edward J. Smith,



was to retire after he docked in New York Harbor. "So far," he had said, his career as a ship's captain "had been uneventful." That was about to change. The *Titanic* steamed out of Southampton's dock at noon on April 10, 1912.

Near midnight four days later, the ship struck an iceberg, in spite of repeated warnings. The "unsinkable" dream ship began to sink into the icy waters of the North Atlantic Ocean about 400 miles off the coast of Newfoundland. As elaborately as the ship had been furnished, sadly, it lacked an essential safety feature—sufficient lifeboats for all 2, 207 passengers. It was immediately evident that many would not be saved. What about Annie? An unconfirmed report has it that Annie Funk, already seated in a lifeboat, gave up her seat to another woman—a mother with children. Whether true or not, those who knew her said, "That would be just like Annie." She, along with 1,500 others, perished in the greatest catastrophe yet known. The mighty *Titanic* was no more. The date was April 15, 1912.

James Cameron's film made \$500 million in box-office sales. But he neglected to tell the priceless story of a Mennonite woman who gave herself to the people of Janjgir, India—and perhaps died in the place of another woman on the *Titanic*.

## Menno Simons and the Nazi Hunters

At the end of WW II, the Allied army scoured the German countryside for Nazi soldiers in hiding. A company of American troops approached the home of the Christian Landes family, Mennonites who lived near Lautenbach. The officer asked about German soldiers and demanded entrance to the house. Father Landes said there were no soldiers hiding in his house. Not trusting the patriarch's word, the officer ordered



*Menno Simons, Symbol of Truth-telling*

a search.

When the officer stepped into the living room of the Landes house, a familiar image on the wall caught his eye. It was a portrait of Menno Simons. So these were Mennonites. He immediately called off the search and gave this explanation to the confused soldiers: "These people are Mennonites. If they say there are no Nazis here, I believe them. Let's go!"

The astounded Landes family asked how he recognized the portrait of Menno. The officer said he was from Pennsylvania, where he had lived among Mennonites. He had learned to know them as honest people, who could be trusted to tell the truth.

## Caring for Memory in the Midst of Integration

"One day in June 1916, Noah Long, a trustee in the Clinton Frame Amish Mennonite Church, went to the church house five miles east of Goshen, Indiana, with a ladder and some white paint. He climbed above the entrance to the sign,

"Clinton Frame Amish Mennonite Church," and expunged the word *Amish*."

That's how Paton Yoder tells the story in *Tradition and Transition*. But what was the point? Noah Long was helping integration along. Not the current integration of MCs, GCs, and CMCs, of course, but rather, the integration of Mennonite and Amish Mennonite conferences early in this century.

Noah Long's conference, the Indiana-Michigan Amish Mennonite Conference, had just voted to integrate with its Mennonite counterpart, the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Noah wasted no time in noting the change on his congregation's hand-painted sign.

Most of the members approved of their trustee's action, but others grumbled that he was rushing things too much. Nevertheless, the Clinton Frame congregation was no longer *Amish* Mennonite. Other congregations and conferences followed their lead; by 1927, official integration of Amish Mennonite conferences and Mennonite conferences was achieved.

What were the results? Paton Yoder makes this observation: "In dropping *Amish* from their name, the Amish Mennonites had undoubtedly facilitated the merger, but at a price. Although constituting more than half of the union, the Amish



*Trustee Noah Long. Credit: Harold and Annabelle Bontreger*



Mennonites had unwittingly covered their tracks" (*Tradition & Transition* [Herald Press, 1991], p. 17).

Four-score and two years later, we are again in the midst of a major integration. The Mennonite Church, the General Conference Mennonite Church, and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada are forging a new Mennonite Church. Some of us, like trustee Noah Long, are ready to get this thing done! Others of us, like some members of Long's congregation, fear we are moving with too much haste.

Some are focusing on the joy and hope in this new union, believing that we are fulfilling Jesus' prayer "that they become one." We anticipate new energy, greater clarity of mission and purpose, and we hope for greater efficiency in our ministries. But we also experience pain. We're losing something, too—the familiarity of long affiliation in our own conferences and churchwide ministries, familiar faces, names, and polity. It will never be the same.

This is appropriate and to be expected. But what else will be lost? What will historians, with the benefit of hindsight, write about us four-score years from now? Will they write that we, too, have paid a price? Will they say that we, too, have covered our tracks?

We do not need to repeat the history of Amish Mennonites in the last merger—to lose the sense of our past identity, our stories. However the organizational lines are redrawn and whatever shape new charts and structures are given, it is essential that we nurture the memory of our own particular pilgrimage—even as we hear and embrace the new stories of other pilgrimages.

Organizational structures will not nurture collective memory. A strong sense of memory, however, can survive almost any organizational structure. *L*

## Book Review



*Harold S. Bender, Albert N. Keim, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pa., 1998, \$23.99 (paper).*

### by Stanley Shenk

Albert N. Keim has written a quality biography of the major Mennonite Church leader of the 20th century. Its subject, Harold S. Bender, was outsized. Bender was "an event—a human phenomenon of unique dimension," to quote Robert Friedmann. He had great intellectual power, earnest commitment to Christ and the church, thorough study under some of the best theologians of his era, unusual ability to work with (or around) a variety of personalities, practical committee skills, special loyalty to his Anabaptist heritage, vast physical energy and capacity for work, and an intense drive to achieve and excel. These are power phrases, of course, but I am writing about an astonishing person.\*

Before going further, let us look at Harold Bender, the man. What kind of person was he? Yes, he was

gifted, a bear for work, an achiever. But what else? Perhaps the question can best be answered by a mix of anecdote and assertion.

The five-year-old son of Joe Richards had a problem. He had just left kindergarten at the College Mennonite Church (Goshen) and was heading home. Before him was a busy highway, and his father was late in meeting him. The boy got across safely. Later Joe asked him how he had managed it. The answer was immediate: "That man who lives in the corner house . . . he knew my name and helped me across the street." That man? H. S. Bender.

A more personal story: when a well-meaning Christian brother learned in 1943 that I was going to Goshen College, he advised me pointedly: "You look out for Harold Bender. He's slick!" That fall and winter I had five courses under Bender. I watched . . . and listened . . . and decided he was the greatest teacher I had ever had. Nor did I find him "slick."

Harold Bender was not famous for public expressions of humor. But there were exceptions. One April 1st he suddenly announced a quiz to a startled class, but then followed with "April Fool!"

In 1944 I was a student in Bender's General Church History class; he was lecturing on the concept of eternal punishment, as held by the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. He spoke of Limbo I, Limbo II, Purgatory, and Hell. Innocently and with real curiosity, I raised my hand and asked, "Brother Bender, according to the Roman Catholic view in the Middle Ages, where would I, as a non-Catholic, go—to Limbo I or Limbo II?" Bender's instant answer: "You go to Hell."

Bedlam ensued. Students rocked and bellowed with laughter, held their sides, blew their noses, and then started laughing again. H. S. just looked on and grinned. It was not typical language for our professor, but I had given him an opening



wider than a barn door. He couldn't resist and walked right in.

Twenty-five years later, I told the story to Elizabeth Horsch Bender, the wonderful woman and scholarly collaborator who was his widow. She laughed richly, and then said, "Harold had a great sense of humor." She probably knew—better than anyone else.

The biography reveals Bender as a man of simple, unashamed, warm piety. Peter Dyck, who traveled with him in relief work in post-World War II Europe, recalled that "each evening, without fail, Bender read a passage of Scripture and kneeled by his bedside for audible prayer." Probably no one who was at the final session of the 1962 Mennonite World Conference in Kitchener, Ontario, has forgotten Bender's closing prayer: "Yes, Great Jehovah, guide us, lead us, until some day we shall hear the welcome applaud: 'Come home, thou beloved of the Lord, thou servant of mine, and dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'" At the time, Bender was struggling with cancer of the pancreas; less than seven weeks later, he was dead.

In the book's first 200 pages, Keim skillfully handles Bender's early experiences—invaluable background for understanding his super-busy later years. The key elements include Bender's childhood and youth in the Prairie Street Congregation in Elkhart, Indiana; his achievements in high school and at Goshen College (class of 1918); meeting at Goshen his future wife, Elizabeth Horsch; and his early teaching. Perhaps essential in this portion of the biography is the account of Bender's formulation of what turned out to be lifelong goals.

While engaged in graduate theological studies at Princeton in 1922, Bender received a letter from his friend Noah Oyer. In it was a question: "What are the present urgent needs for Mennonites?"

In his reply, Bender listed seven: "A sense of mission, a genuine vital and normal religious experience, a

sense of stewardship of life and talents, and a deeper sense of the simple NT gospel, a simple piety, the doctrine of love in all affairs of men and nations, and an absolute loyalty to all the teachings of Christ." The primary way to meet these seven needs, Bender added, was "a trained leadership and a trained ministry." Keim's incisive next two sentences: "The 26-year-old Bender had found his life calling. He would devote the next forty years to carrying out the basic program he described to Noah Oyer in November 1922."

Keim proceeds to describe Harold and Elizabeth Bender's considered acceptance in 1924 of a call to teach at the reopened Goshen College, despite the conservative-progressive disputes that had caused its closing for one year. "Easing Harold's difficulties," Keim relates, "was the fact that he was predisposed to be cautious: he received no satisfaction from rocking the boat. He was in fact theologically orthodox and conservative." On Sept. 17, 1924, Harold Bender began his 38 years of service at Goshen, and, as Keim illustrates, his pivotal leadership through all the changes in Mennonite, American, and world culture that marked the ensuing decades. As Keim has well said, "Bender became a leader . . . because the times demanded a leader and because his particular qualities of personality and character commended him to his people."

What were Harold Bender's main achievements? Even an incomplete answer would have to include at least the nine points listed below.

- As dean of Goshen College (1931-1944), Bender stimulated and presided over changes that included new curricula, accreditation, a greater emphasis on our heritage, and an expanded enrollment.
- Just prior to and during World War II, he was the key figure in planning and bringing to fruition

an alternative service program.

- Beginning in the 1920s, he was the chief stimulus of a tremendous increase in Anabaptist studies.
- His "Anabaptist Vision" address, given in 1943 to the American Society of Church History and later issued as a booklet, expressed the essence (or something close to it) of 16th-century Anabaptism. It constituted a dynamic statement of Mennonite belief and action—and became a rallying cry for his people.
- His leadership of the Goshen College Biblical Seminary from 1944 until his death in 1962 was perhaps the most important single element in the Mennonite (MC) shift toward a trained ministry.
- Through his unique worldwide acquaintance with Mennonite leaders and his involvement in Mennonite World Conferences from 1936 to 1962, he was our greatest exponent of Mennonite ecumenicity.
- He founded in 1927 *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* and later conceived and carried through the enormous *Mennonite Encyclopedia* project—two scholarly undertakings that have received high praise from a variety of sources.
- He redefined the core of contemporary Mennonitism from a somewhat stationary or inactive faith in Christ combined with obedience or holiness of life, to the Anabaptist dynamism of "Nachfolge Christi" (earnest discipleship, following Christ).
- To quote Keim, "Harold Bender helped to create the institutions and the theology which carried Mennonites through perhaps their most pervasive transforma-



tion since the sixteenth century," the transition from the 1920s through the early 1960s.

Harold Bender also had his share of minus factors. Perhaps the biggest was that he never really learned the important managerial skill of delegating authority. He tended to micromanage.

He could be impatient and arrogant. In the mid-1920s, via a book review, he made "a devastating and intemperate attack on a fellow Mennonite scholar," J. E. Hartzler.

He freely dispensed advice to a number of his students on a great variety of things—from social graces (he once mentioned to me, while in my living room, that when seated one should always have at least one foot flat on the floor), to where to do graduate work, to where to serve, to, on occasion, who would be a good date partner. Much of the above was insightful and appreciated. Some, however, was resented.

He tried to do too much; his workload was almost unbelievable. At one point in 1957, he had no fewer than 14 major assignments. While he did significant writing, both scholarly and popular, he

made manuscript promises that he couldn't fulfill. But what Bender did achieve was phenomenal. It has been wryly noted that he tried to do the work of five men, but failed; he could only do as much as four and a half.

Keim praises Bender at many points, but like the good historian and writer that he is, avoids idolizing him. The appeal and achievements of H. S. B. are here. So are the warts—perhaps too many for a few readers, perhaps not enough for others.


Any critical comments? A few. The book's index is incomplete.

C. F. Klassen, "a near-legendary figure in the Mennonite world," receives six page references; I counted 15 in the book. The great Christian Neff has five page index references; I saw at least 13. Orie O. Miller is given 13 index citations; I counted nearly 50 throughout the text. J. R. Mumaw and George H. Williams do not appear in the index at all.

Bender is emphasized (and rightly so) in relation to the great Mennonite World Conferences of Basel (1952) and Kitchener (1962), but only three or four passing references are made to the 1957

Karlsruhe World Conference. There, too, Bender was a prominent participant.

Perhaps the chief criticism is that too little is said about Bender's personal or private life. In fact, in Keim's splendid six-page epilogue, it is stated that "his public life became all-consuming. It is thus no accident that a biography of Harold Bender is almost entirely the life of a public man." But this was only partly true. Many allusions (and, yes, some good descriptions) are given of his family life, trips, friends, and other special interests. I wish more such detail had been included.

But is easy to criticize omissions. No book can say it all. As it is, the text of this volume runs to 528 pages, and these are both scholarly and readable. Albert Keim, a long-time history teacher at Eastern Mennonite University, has written on a variety of subjects. With this volume, he steps to the forefront of Mennonite biographical writing, giving us, in *Harold S. Bender*, a treasure. 

—Stanley Shenk is retired from teaching Bible at Goshen College

## 1998 Horsch Essay Winners

We are happy to announce that the first place winners of the 1998 John Horsch Mennonite History Contest are Margot Kottelin-Longley of Turku, Finland, in Class I; Tamara Sawatzky of Elkhart, Indiana, in Class II; Johathan Yoder of Harrisonburg, Virginia, in Class III. All winners and their papers are listed below:

Class I - Seminary and Graduate School: First place, Margot Kottelin-Longley, Abo Akademi University, *An Anabaptist Confession of Faith 1527*

Second, Natasha Sawatzky,

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *Die Gelehrten der Verkehrten: Medieval Memory of the Eucharist in 16th-century Northern Europe*

Third, Jennifer Graber, Emory University, *Hymnals of the Mennonite Church as Reflections of Changing American Mennonite Identity: 1900-1969*

Class II - Undergraduate College and University: First place, Tamara Sawatzky, Bethel College, Newton, Kansas, *The Russian Mennonite Experience through the Eyes of J. P. Klassen*

Second, Richard Sieber, Goshen College, *Moving the Masses: George Lambert and the Push for Mennonite Missions, 1897-1898*

Third, Shasta Schmidt, Bethel

College, Newton, Kansas, *The Makings of a Mennonite Millennial Migration: Claas Epp and the Great Trek to Central Asia*

Class III - High School: First, Jonathan Yoder, Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Virginia, *A Brief Exploration of the Differences in Growth Between Mainline and Conservative Mennonite Groups*,

Second, Zach Swartley, Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Virginia, *The Enigma of Amish Youth*

Third, Ben Beachy, Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Virginia, *Dare to Take the Lead: Dr. Myron Augsburger*



# New Treasures: Archives of the Mennonite Church

By Dennis Stoesz, Archivist

What follows is a sampling of personal papers and organizational records that have come into the Archives during the last six months of 1998. They are listed alphabetically by the name of the collection.

**Central Mennonite Church, 1925-1974, Elida, Ohio.** Three record books, 1925-1974, from this extinct church, which was begun by members of the Pike and Salem Mennonite Churches. The earliest book, 1925-31, includes a list of the 79 charter members, as well as financial records of the first six years. The other two books are a Financial Record Book, 1932-1951,

and a Minute Book, 1971-74. 3 files. Donor: Fred Stalter, Elida, Ohio; and Loretta Troyer, Goshen, Indiana.

**Hostetter, Doug, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nyack, New York.** Papers, 1995-1997, on Hostetter's project of writing and publishing the Bosnian Student Project: *A Response to Genocide* (Pendle Hill Publications, 1997, 40 pages), a project for which he was the director from 1993-1998. Includes background research, correspondence, written drafts, and the published pamphlet. The project assisted more than 150 Bosnian students from var-

ious ethnic and religious traditions to escape the war zone in Bosnia and come to the United States to continue their education. Since 1993, Hostetter has been the Interfaith/International Secretary for the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Earlier he served as Executive Director of the FOR, 1987-1993; worked with the American Friends Service Committee, 1980-1987; with the United Methodist Office for the United Nations, 1971-1980; and served as a volunteer in Vietnam, under the Mennonite Central Committee, 1966-1969. The archives holds Hostetter's journals, correspondence, photographs, tapes, films, posters, and artifacts from his experience in Vietnam, as well as from his ongoing involvement in peace and justice since then. The official records of the Fellowship of Reconciliation are found in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Pennsylvania. 6 linear inches. Donor: Doug Hostetter.

**King, Levi J., 1844-1916 and Barbara Ellen (Yoder), 1845-1910.** Papers, 1897-1917, and taped interview, circa 1970, covering three generations from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, to West Liberty, Logan County, Ohio. Includes last will and testament of John Y. King (1819-1906), Mifflin County, and 1916 obituary notice of son Levi J. King, Logan County, Ohio. Also includes diary, 1910-1917, of a son of Levi and Barbara, John Y. King (1879-1968); and diaries, 1905-1913, of a daughter of Levi and Barbara, Delilah J. King (1887-1974). Diaries include church membership records, 1913-17, of Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio, where John Y. King served as minister; schedule of preachers; and life on the farm. Additional items in the collection include a District 4 Public School class record, 1898-99, District 4, Liberty Township, Logan County, Ohio; and two school souvenir cards, 1897-1902, with J. B. Hooley and Harvey B. Yoder as teachers. Interview is with Aunt



Doug Hostetter (on right) with Asmira Kulenovic in Bihac, Bosnia, 1996. Hostetter was director of the Bosnian Student Project, 1993-1998, which enabled over 150 Bosnian students from various ethnic and religious traditions to escape the war zone in Bosnia and come to the United States to continue their education. Asmira is the younger sister of Samir Kulenovic, a Bosnian student from Bihac who was hosted by Hostetter in his home during the war. Photograph by Dolores Gunter. Source: Doug Hostetter Collection.





*Participants at the historic 1955 Puidoux Theological Conference. Back row (l-r): Prof. H. G. Wood, Pastor Fritzhermann, Prof. Ernst Wolf, Doris Neff, John H. Yoder, Prof. Culbert G. Rutenber, W. Harold Row, Dr. Alvin Pitcher, Pastor Edouard Theis, Prof. John W. Harvey, Oberkirchenrat Heinz Kloppenburg, Oberkirchenrat Joachim Beckmann, and Dr. G. Hartdorff. Seated on steps, bottom left (l-r): Dr. E. L. Allen, Prof. Goetz Harbsmeier, Dean Harold S. Bender, and A. J. Muste. Second row, starting with seated person on wall with name tag (l-r): Colin Fawcett, Dean William Beahm, Dr. Hendrick Bremer, Pastor Jean Lasserre, Pastor Emile Jéquier, Pastor Walter Dignath, Esko Loewen, André Trocmé, Graydon F. Snyder, Mrs. Percy Bartlett, Albert J. Meyer, Percy Bartlett, and M. R. Zigler. Source: Albert J. Meyer Collection.*

Lila (Delilah King), about her years as a child, as taped by Kenneth King, circa 1970. 5 linear inches. Donor: Carol Oyer from the John S. Oyer Estate, Goshen, Indiana. Levi J. was John S. Oyer's grandfather.

**Locust Grove Mennonite Church, 1943-1990s, Elkhart, Indiana.** Records, 1951-1985, including a file on special events, 1951-1968; balloting of church officers, 1957-1970; church council reports, 1956-1975, and annual reports, 1956-1975. 5 linear inches. Donor: Rev. Aden Horst, Elkhart. Horst was a pastor of this congregation for a number of years.

**Mennonite Board of Missions, Voluntary Service Department, 1946- , Elkhart, Indiana.** Records, 1954-1997, as organized into three sections: Closed Out Units, 1954-1997; Service Units, 1964-1987; and General Records, 1954-1997. This

program had its origin during and after World War II, and some of the first units were overseas, 1946-1951, in Poland, Belgium, and Ethiopia. The Mission Board's VS program, however, began in earnest in 1948, and a total of 257 units have been opened across Canada and the United States from that time up to 1997. Some units only lasted a year, while others have lasted for more than 30 years. The directors of this program have included Laurence Horst, 1946-1949; Levi Hartzler, 1949-1952; Boyd Nelson, 1952-1954; Ray Horst, 1954-1974; John Eby, 1974-1979; Rick Stiffney, 1979-1981; Dale Wentorf, 1981-1983; Mary Herr, 1983-1984; Dave Miller, 1985-1988; Rick Kulp, 1988-1990; Suzanne Lind, 1990-1991; and Saul Murica, 1991-1998. Miles Reimer, 1998-, currently administers this program as a joint venture between Mennonite Board of Mission and Commission

on Overseas Missions. 8.75 linear feet. Donor: Ethel Hoffman, Coordinator of Office Services.

**Mennonite Central Committee, 1920- , Communications Department, Photographs, Akron, Pennsylvania.** Photographs, 1984-1989, including prints, negatives, and contact sheets, of this organization's involvement around the world with people suffering from poverty, conflict, oppression, and natural disaster. Photographs include the work across United States and Canada, as well as Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kampuchea, Kenya, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal,





Destroyed Muslim homes and marketplace, Bosanska Krupa, Bosnia, 1996. Photograph by Dolores Gunter. Source: Doug Hostetter Collection.

Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Somalia, South Africa, Soviet Union, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Vietnam, West Bank, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. 8 linear feet. Donor: Irene Leaman, Records, Library and Archives Manager.

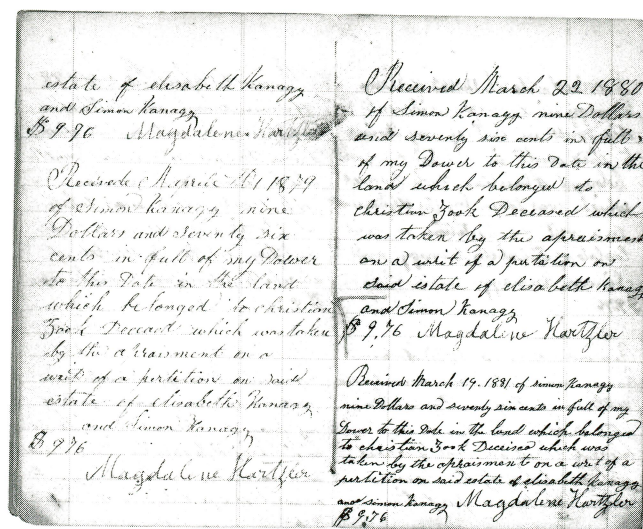
**Mennonite Church General Board, 1971- , Elkhart, Indiana.** Records, 1987-1989, including correspondence and reports of the work of the General Board. Some of the personnel during this time period included James M. Lapp as Executive Secretary; Samuel Hernandez, Georgia Lovett, and Miriam Book as Associate Secretaries; and Eloise Glick, Freida M. Myers, Kathryn E. Rodgers, and Mildred E. Schrock as Administrative Assistants. 6.25 linear feet. Donor: Scott Hartman, Accountant.

**Meyer, Albert J., Goshen, Indiana.** Papers, 1953-1958, of Albert J. and Mary Ellen (Yoder) Meyer's voluntary service in Valdoie, France, and

Basel, Switzerland, under Mennonite Central Committee. Materials include correspondence and papers from many peace conferences and organizations that Meyer was involved in while in Europe, such as the annual conference of the American Mennonite Students in Europe, which became known as the Concern Group. The most important conference was the Puidoux Theological Conference in 1955 on "The Lordship of Christ over the

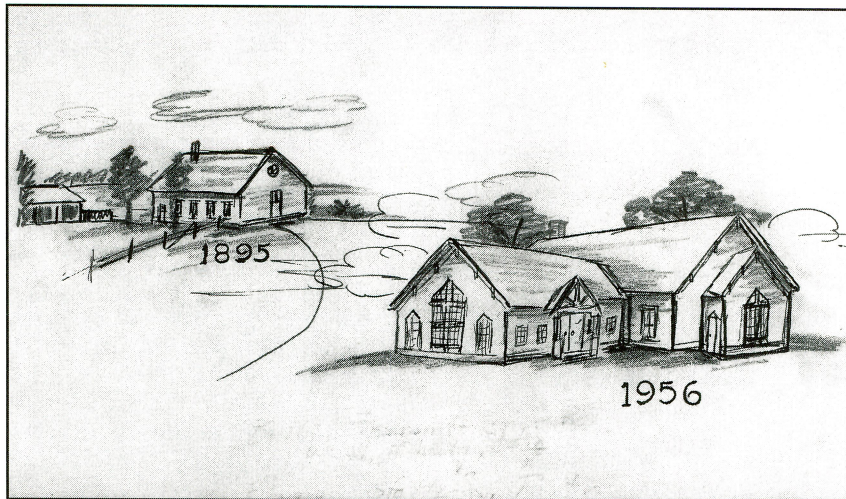
Church and State," for which Meyer acted as the organizer and secretary. This conference was initiated by the Historic Peace Churches in response to the World Council of Churches statement that "war is wrong, and contrary to God." The conference became a historic event when it brought together not only Quaker, Church of the Brethren, Mennonite, and Fellowship of Reconciliation thinkers, but also many European theologians representing a vast spectrum of positions on what had happened in World War II. Collection also includes correspondence with fellow MCC volunteers, with John H. Yoder, with Clarence Bauman, with family and friends back home, and about MCC's ongoing service and mission projects. 2 linear feet. Donor: Al Meyer.

**Ore Bank Farm Documents, 1821-1929, Union Township, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania.** Documents such as deeds, land agreements, maps, bonds, mortgages, and estate sales that reflect land ownership of this Amish farm from Long Christian Zook (1776-1851) in the



Dower Book, 1853-1900, of Magdelene (Zook) Hartzler, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. Money received by her from the "land which belonged to Christian Zook Deceased which was taken by the appraisal on a writ of a partition on said estate of Elisabeth Kanagy and Simon Kanagy." Total amount of Dower was \$463.56, as paid out annually by the amount of \$9.76 over 48 years—the first two years were slightly smaller amounts. Source: Ore Bank Farm Documents Collection.





*The meetingplace for the Bethel Mennonite Church, 1895- , West Liberty, Ohio. It "started as a result of the conversion of twelve . . . young people during evangelistic meetings held by John F. Funk and D. J. Johns at the South Union Church." The archives recently received the diary of John Y. King, minister, which includes some membership records of this church, 1913-1917. Drawing is by Mrs. Irvin J. Kauffman, 1956. Quote is from *Mennonites of the Ohio and Eastern Conference*, page 304. Source: Wilmer Swope Photograph Collection.*


early 1800s to Joseph E. Sharp (1885-1967) in 1929. Names of persons found in the papers include Henry Bawel, Jonathan L. Byler, Christian Detweiler, David Z. Detweiler (1850-1913), Fanny Detweiler, Simon K. Detweiler, Charles L. Diffenderfer, Joseph M. Flemming, Magdalena Zook Hartzler, Jacob C. Hertzler, Elizabeth Zook Kanagy (1819-1897), Simon Kanagy (1829-1891), Logan Iron and Steel, Joseph Miller, Jonas Z. and Amelia Peachey, Christian Peachey (d. 1886), Christian Sharp, Elizabeth K. Sharp (1839-1905), Jesse D. Sharp (1908-1997), Jonas J. Yoder, Jonathan J. Yoder, Benjamin Zook, Catherine Zook, David Zook, Joel Zook (1807-1875), and Samuel S. Zook (1824-1851). Other materials include a dower book, 1853-1900, of Magdalena C. Zook (1827-1913); guardianship papers, 1821-23, of Catherine Koenig; and patent papers, 1897. 6.5 linear inches. Collection on loan to Archives by John E. Sharp, Goshen, Indiana.

**Pratt, Dorothy Ann Overstreet, Granger, Indiana.** Interviews, 1994, by Pratt of eight Amish, three

Mennonites, and one Church of the Brethren on their experiences as conscientious objectors in World War II. Interviews include descriptions of the people's growing up years, involvement before the war, work and life in the Civilian Public Service Camps, reasons why they were conscientious objectors, and evaluations of their experiences. Interviews are transcribed and fill 30 pages. Restriction on use of materials is that names of individual Amish cannot be used. Pratt conducted these interviews in connection with her dissertation on "A Study of Cultural Persistence; The Amish in LaGrange County, Indiana, 1841-1945," University of Notre Dame, 1997. Available from Mennonite Historical Library. 1 file. Donor: Dorothy Pratt.

**Troyer, Clarence, 1907-1997.** Sermons, 1940-1989, of Troyer's work as minister (1940) and bishop (1948) in the Upper Peninsula, Michigan. Collection also includes a notebook, 1930-31, when Troyer attended the Kitchener Mennonite Bible School; and two notebooks, ca. 1947, used by Troyer in teaching

many winter classes at the Michigan Mennonite Bible School at Fairview, Michigan. In 1940, Clarence Troyer and his spouse, Wavia Irene Troyer (1908-1987), with their children, moved from LaGrange County, Indiana, up to the Peninsula as church planters under the Mission Board of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Troyer first served at Wildwood Mennonite, 1940-1952, located near Engadine, but his work came to focus primarily on his bishop oversight of the 10 Mennonite churches that began there between 1937 and 1952 and his work with the Conference. He retired from his bishop responsibilities in 1980, wrote a history of The Mennonite Church in the Upper Peninsula in 1986. He continued to preach in the Mennonite churches, in the nondenominational church at Curtis, Michigan, and on the radio at Newberry, Michigan. 15 linear inches. Donor: Steve and Rachel Nolt, South Bend, Indiana, on behalf of the children of Clarence and Wavia I. Troyer.

**Yoder, Jonathan G., 1904-1991 and Fyrne A. Miller, 1904-1995.** Films, 1937-1953, of Mennonites in India, as taken by Jonathan Yoder. Dr. Yoder served as superintendent of the Dhamtari Christian Hospital, Dhamtari, Madhya Pradesh, India. Yoder, together with his wife, and children, served under the auspices of the Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, 1937-1945, 1947-1953, 1957-1958, and 1978-1979. They also served at Landour, India in 1960 and several years in Nepal, 1961-1963, 1970-1972, and 1975-1976. Materials also include films by a sister, Rhea Yoder, when she taught at the school at Woodstock, Landour, India, 1948-1959. There are a total of 16 8mm films, in both five and seven inch reels. 15 linear inches. Donor: Paton Yoder, Goshen, Indiana. 



# Directory of Mennonite and Related Church Historians and Committees

This directory lists North American Mennonite, Amish, and related historical committees, societies, conference historians, and interpretation centers. We would appreciate any updates or corrections from readers. This list also appears on the Historical Committee and Archives web site.

**Allegheny Conference Historical Committee**, Mark Moyer, 601 Pittsburgh St, Scottdale, PA 15683, 724 887-4784

**Archives of the Mennonite Church**, see Historical Committee and Archives of the Mennonite Church

**Atlantic Coast Conference Historian**, Margaret Derstine, 133 W Main St, Apt 4, Strasburg, PA 17579, 717 687-8259

**Brethren in Christ Historical Society**, E. Morris Sider, Archives of Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027, 717 691-6048, Fax: 717 691-6042

**California Mennonite Historical Society**, Rod Janzen, 4824 E Butler, Fresno, CA 93727, 209 53-2225, E-mail: kennsrem@fresno.edu

**Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians**, Kenneth L. Yoder, PO Box 591, Grantsville, MD 21536, 301 895-5687

**Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies**, Abe Dueck, 1-169 Riverton Ave, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5, 204 669-6575, Fax: 204 654-1865, E-mail: CmbsArchives@CdnMBCConf.ca, URL:

<http://www.cdnmbconf.ca/mb/cmbs.htm>

**Central District Conference Historical Committee**, William Keeney, 140 N Lawn Ave, Bluffton, OH 45817, 419 358-6017  
**Conference of Mennonites in Alberta**, Henry D. Goerzen, RR 1, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0, 403 335-8414

**Conference of Mennonites in Canada History and Archives Committee**, Ken Reddig, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781, E-mail: kreddig@confmenno.ca, URL: <http://www.mmhs.org>

**Conservative Mennonite Conference Historical Committee**, Elmer S. Yoder, 3511 Edison St, Hartsville, OH 44632, 330 877-9566

**Delaware Mennonite Historical Association**, John J. Yoder, PO Box 238, Greenwood, DE 19950

**Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association**, 31 Pickwick Dr, Leamington, ON; mailing address: Harold Thiessen, RR 4, Leamington, ON N8H 3V7

**Franklin Mennonite Conference Historical Committee**, Merle Cordell, 8979 Grindstone Hill Rd, Chambersburg, PA 17201, 717 597-7415

**General Conference Mennonite Church**, John Thiesen, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117, 316 283-2500, E-mail: jthiesen@bethelks.edu

**Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust**, Galen Horst-Martiz, 6133 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19144, 215 843-0943, Fax: 215 843-6263

**Hanover-Steinbach Historical Society**, Delbert Plett, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0, 204 326-6454

**Hans Herr House Museum**, Douglas J. Nyce, 1849 Hans Herr Dr, Willow Street, PA 17584, 717 464-4438

**Heritage Historical Library**, David Luthy, RR 4, Aylmer, ON N5H 2R3

**Historical Committee and Archives of the Mennonite Church**, John E. Sharp, 1700 S Main St, Goshen, IN 46526, 219 535-7477, Fax: 219 535-7293, E-mail: johnes@goshen.edu, Web Site: <http://www.goshen.edu/mcarchives>

**Howard-Miami Counties Heritage and Genealogical Society**, Elaine Sommers Rich, 112 S Spring St, Bluffton, OH 45817, 419 358-1515

**Illinois Amish Interpretive Center**, Wilmer Otto, PO Box 244, Arcola, IL 61910, 217 268-3599, E-mail: wotto@earthlink.net

**Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society and Illinois Conference Historian**, Edwin J. Stalter, Mennonite Heritage Center, PO Box 1007, Metamora, IL 61548, 309 367-2551 or 815 796-2918

**Indiana-Michigan Conference Historian**, Daniel E. Hochstetler, 1008 College Ave, Goshen, IN 46526, 219 533-7819, E-mail: 104370.3337@compuserve.com

**Iowa-Nebraska Mennonite Conference Historian**, Barbara Troyer, 1001 8th Ave, Wellman, IA 52356, 319 646-2151

**Juniata Mennonite Historical Society**, Noah L. Zimmerman, The Historical Center, HCR 63, Richfield, PA 17086, 717 694-3543

**Kidron Community Historical Society**, Bruce Detweiler, Breckbill, Kidron-Sonnenberg Heritage Center, 13153 Emerson Rd, PO Box 234, Kidron, OH



44636, 330 857-9111, E-mail: bruce-j-i-db@juno.com

**Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society**, Carolyn C. Wenger, 2215 Millstream Rd, Lancaster, PA 17602, 717 393-9745, Fax: 717 393-8751

**Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society**, Ken Reddig, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781, E-mail: kreddig@confmenno.ca, URL: <http://www.mmhs.org>

**Meetingplace, The**, Curtis Brubaker, 33 King St, Saint Jacobs, ON N0B 2N0, 519 664-3518

**Menno-Hof**, Tim Lichti, PO Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565, 219 768-4117, E-mail: timlichti@tln.net

**Menno Simons Library and Archives**, James O. Lehman, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, 540 432-4000, E-mail: lehmanjo@lib.emu.edu, URL: <http://www.emu.edu/library/histlib.htm>

**Mennonite Archival Centre**, Hugo Friesen, Columbia Bible College, 32025 Dahlstrom Ave, Ste B, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2Z8, 604 853-6177, Fax: 604 853-3063

**Mennonite Archives of Ontario**, Samuel Steiner, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6, 519 885-0220, ext. 238, E-mail: steiner@watservl.uwaterloo.ca

**Mennonite Brethren Churches (Canada) Historical Committee**, Abe Dueck, 1-169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5, 204 669-6575, Fax: 204 654-1865, E-mail: CmbsArchives@CdnMBConf.ca, URL: <http://www.cdnmbconf.ca/mb/cmbs.htm>

**Mennonite Brethren Conference (North American) Historical Commission**, Paul Toews, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 4824 E Butler, Fresno, CA 93727, 209 453-2225, E-mail: ptttoews@fresno.edu

**Mennonite Brethren Church (USA)**, Peggy Goertzen, Center for MB Studies, Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS 67063, 316 947-3121, E-mail: peggyg@tcnet.tabor.edu

**Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada**, Vera Martin, RR 2, West Montrose, ON N0B 2V0, 519 669-5379

**Mennonite Church Historical Association**, see Historical Committee and Archives of the Mennonite Church

**Mennonite Heritage Center**, 4850 Molly Pitcher Highway S, Chambersburg, PA 17201-9233, 717 375-4544

**Mennonite Heritage Centre**, Ken Reddig, Director, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781, E-mail: kreddig@confmenno.ca, URL: <http://www.mmhs.org>

**Mennonite Heritage Village**, PO Box 1136, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0, 204 326-9661

**Mennonite Historical Library**, Ann Hilty, Librarian, Bluffton College, Bluffton, OH 45817, 419 358-3365, E-mail: hiltya@bluffton.edu

**Mennonite Historical Library**, John D. Roth, Director, Goshen College, 1700 S Main St, Goshen, IN 46526, 219 535-7418, E-mail: johndr@goshen.edu

**Mennonite Historical Society**, Walter Sawatsky, President, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Ave, Elkhart, IN 46517, 219 295-3726, E-mail: 72610.3063@compuserve.com

**Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta**, Henry D. Goerzen, RR 1, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0, 403 335-8414

**Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia**, Bill Riediger, Mennonite Archives, 2940 Clearbrook Rd, Clearbrook, BC V2T 2Z8, 604 833-3358

**Mennonite Historical Society of Canada**, Ron Loewen, PO Box 21441, Steinbach, MB R0A 2T3, 204 326-2715, URL: <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/MHSC/mhsc.html>

**Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania**, Mennonite Heritage Center, Beth Imchen, Director, PO Box 82, 565 Yoder Rd, Harleysville, PA 19438, 215 256-3020, E-mail: info@mhep.org, URL: <http://www.mhep.org>

<http://www.mhep.org>

**Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa**, Lois Swartzentruber Gugel, President, 710 12th St, Kalona, IA 52247, 319 656-3732

**Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario**, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6, 519 885-0220, E-mail: mhso@watservl.uwaterloo.ca

**Mennonite Information Center**, Dr. Bruce Friesen, 5798 CR 77, PO Box 324, Berlin, OH 44610, 330 893-3192

**Mennonite Library and Archives**, John D. Thiesen, Director, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117, 316 283-2500 ext. 304, E-mail: jthiesen@menno.bethelks.edu, URL: <http://www.bethelks.edu/services/mla>

**Michiana Anabaptist Historians**, John Bender, 206 Marine Ave, Elkhart, IN 46516, 219 293-2453, E-mail: info@greencroft.org

**Mifflin County Mennonite Historical Society**, Paul Bender, PO Box 5603, Belleville, PA 17004, 717 935-2598 or 717 935-5574

**Millbank Information Centre**, Glenn Zehr, PO Box 35, Millbank, ON N0K 1L0, 519 595-8037, E-mail: megzehr@perth.net

**Missionary Church Archives and Historical Collection**, Tim Erdel, Bethel College, 1001 W McKinley Ave, Mishawaka, IN 46545, 219 259-8511, E-mail: erdelt@bethel.in.edu

**Muddy Creek Farm Library**, Amos B. and Nora B. Hoover, 376 N Muddy Creek Rd, Denver, PA 17517

**Nebraska Mennonite Historical Society**, Eldon Hostetler, 1014 First St, Apt. 6, Milford, NE 68405, 402 761-3072

**North Central Mennonite Conference**, Fred Kanagy, 753 Road 523, Bloomfield, MT 59315, 406 583-7782

**Northern District Conference**, Rachel Senner, Freeman Academy, 748 S Main, Freeman, SD 57209, 605 925-4237



**Northwest Conference Historian,**  
Harry Stauffer, RR 1, Tofield, AB  
T0B 4J0 403 662-2144

**Ohio Amish Library,** Paul Kline,  
4292 Star Route 39, Millersburg,  
OH 44654, 330 893-2883

**Ohio Conference Historical  
Committee,** Kenneth Nisly, 3781  
Cranwood St NW, North Canton,  
OH 44720, 330 494-0120

**Oregon Mennonite Historical and  
Genealogical Society,** Margaret  
Shetler, 5326 Briar Knob Loop NE,  
Scotts Mills, OR 97375, 503 873-  
6406

**Pacific Northwest Conference,**  
Margaret Shetler 5326 Briar Knob  
Loop NE, Scotts Mills, OR 97375,  
503 873-6406

**The People's Place,** Merle and  
Phyllis Pellman Good, Main  
Street, Intercourse, PA 17534,  
717 768-7171

**Pequea Bruderschaft Library,** on  
Old Leacock Road, one fourth  
mile south of Gordonville,  
mailing address: 176 N Hollander  
Rd, Gordonville, PA 17529

**Saskatchewan Mennonite  
Historical Society,** Leonard  
Doell, PO Box 364, Aberdeen, SK  
S0K 0A0

**Shenadoah Valley Mennonite  
Historians,** Steve Shenk, 1 Village  
Square, Harrisonburg, VA  
22802, 540 433-7477, E-mail:  
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## **Mennonite Historical Bulletin**

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# MIENNONITE

## Historical Bulletin

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No. 2

## Pioneering at Mayton



Wedding picture of John Kilmer Lehman and Susanna Wideman, Sibley, Iowa, February 9, 1898. Credit: Beulah Stauffer Hostetler

By Beulah Stauffer Hostetler

I knew that my grandparents had moved to Mayton, Alberta, when my mother was an infant. She often talked about the hardships, the formidable hills that needed to be crossed in order to purchase supplies. I was able to find bits of additional information in obituaries. The congregational and biographical accounts in the *History of the Alberta-Saskatchewan Mennonite Conference*, compiled by my father, yielded further information. But details and nuances were missing. John and I decided it was necessary to visit Mayton.

The day before leaving Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, for our proposed trip in July 1992, I discovered it was not possible to find Mayton on our maps! We would need to head south from Edmonton, Alberta, securing a better map on the way.

We picked up our rental car in Edmonton on Wednesday afternoon and headed south toward Red Deer. I did not remember having seen Alberta look so lush and green. It was June 24, only a few days from the longest daylight of the year, so we still had five or six hours of daylight. We reached a sign denoting "Red Deer" in good time but had difficulty in finding the town. All we saw was scattered buildings on a maze of roadways. After several near accidents, it seemed time to choose a hotel and to stop for the night. The local time was 7:00 p.m. Our bodies told us it was 10:00 p.m., so we went to our room, pulled the drapes shut, and went to bed.

In the morning we found ourselves within several blocks of the courthouse. When we were about to enter we found it was the old court-



house. A pedestrian pointed out to us the new courthouse, diagonally across the street. The desk clerks knew nothing about Mayton and seemingly did not consider such a question to be a part of their responsibility. John then checked a nearby real estate office. They, too, could give us no information, in spite of the detailed maps on their walls.

I knew that Innisfail had initially been one of the towns closest to Mayton, so we decided to drive there. As we entered the town, we again found a municipal building. But there, too, the clerks knew nothing of Mayton. We did learn that there was a history museum in town, and decided to find it. The museum occupied us for several hours, but we did not learn anything about either the location or the settlement of Mayton, in spite of perusing a file of newspapers dating back to the early 1900s.

In response to our inquiry, a museum attendant recommended a pleasant restaurant in a new shopping mall across town. We were enjoying excellent sandwiches and coffee when three elderly persons entered the restaurant and sat down at a nearby table. John commented that they looked like they had lived in the area for "a hundred years." They would know where Mayton was. He immediately went over and talked to them. Yes, they were farmers from south of Innisfail. They knew the general area where Mayton had been located, but said there was no longer anything there.

They recommended we go to Olds, then east, asking residents of the area for more precise directions.

An elderly couple in the next booth entered the conversation. The man said he used to go dancing in Mayton Hall and that there was a church named May City. He said he could show us on the map where it was located, so I quickly went out to the car and brought in the map. He marked a spot, supposedly two miles east of Olds, on highway 27. That, he said, was the location of the church, and two miles south of there we would find Mayton.

We were elated and joyfully went on our way. We drove south to Olds, then east two or three miles. We found nothing, so when John saw two men drive their truck into a farmyard, he followed them. Upon inquiring, they said our restaurant informant was way off. Mayton was down the road five or six miles after two coulees. We continued on for the designated distance, finding nothing but flat prairie stretching before us. Once again we saw a car drive into a yard, and John followed it. After initial coolness, they said we must continue on for another five miles or so, then we would find the two coulees, and beyond them a gravel road on the right that would lead us to the May City church. We did not know what coulees were, but expected that when we came upon something varying from the general flat prairie, we would be at the coulees.

As predicted, we found the coulees. Each was a large ravine transversing the roadway, extending on either side as far as eye could see. We found the gravel road, but in more than a mile saw no sign of a church, so John stopped a truck coming down the road. Yes, the driver said, the May City church was several miles farther on. There was also a cemetery on the left behind the upcoming cluster of trees. A big book on the Mayton community had come out recently.

We saw no sign of the cemetery as we drove along, but in time we reached the church. Across from the church was a modest dwelling. We stopped there first, doubting that anyone would be at the church. A young matron came out, and in answer to our query, said the pastor would be at the church.

We drove over to the church and entered. A young man appeared, likely to see what the disturbance was, and we told him our mission. Yes, this was the May City church. Gradually he became a bit more friendly and brought out the membership book.

It was evident that a New Mennonite congregation existed before Amos Bauman was silenced by the Ontario Mennonite Conference in 1906. The first membership list was dated 1904. Bauman was listed as a member first in 1909. John then asked if there were any Mennonites in the area. The pastor responded that there were quite a few, but that

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*The Lehman family at Mayton, Alberta, c. 1912. Left to right: Joe, Mary, John K., Susanna, Oliver, Irene, and Alvin. Credit: Beulah Stauffer Hostettler*

most of them did not know that they were Mennonites. This was now a United Missionary Church. The denomination had taken that name in 1947. As an evangelical, revivalist expression, they were initially called New Mennonites in Ontario. In some other areas, they were called Mennonite Brethren in Christ.

We thanked the pastor, then retraced our steps, looking for the cemetery. Not finding it as soon as we thought we should, we turned around, and again John drove into a yard. A sign on the garage greeted us: "Beware of Wife. The dog is O.K." A slender, late-middle aged woman answered the door. When she perceived the contact called for some conversation, she eased herself down onto the porch steps, explaining that she had broken her hip. After more conversation and repeated invitations we went into the house, where we also met her husband. We declined an offer of tea or coffee but soon found ourselves in the living room, looking at the large book we had been told about, *Sweaty Brows and Breaking Plows: A History of Mayton and*

*Mayton City Districts* (n.d., n.p.), c. 1991.

The book was an unbelievable find, a compilation of memories and family histories by residents and former residents of the community. Unfortunately copies were not available. Our hosts served us some refreshing crabapple juice, and then left us alone to examine the book. We leafed through it, noting pages that we would particularly like to have photocopied. They promised to have their nephew copy the pages, and they would send them to us. We thanked them heartily, left some money for the photocopying, and then were off again, this time to the cemetery.

The well-kept cemetery was on our left as we drove up. It had belonged to the Mennonites until 1967. It was now community owned, and they apparently took considerable pride in keeping it up well. I did not recall many deaths in the Mennonite community at Mayton from 1901 to 1918. My grandparents did lose a baby girl, Christina. I knew that if we could find her grave we would have the right cemetery. We quickly found

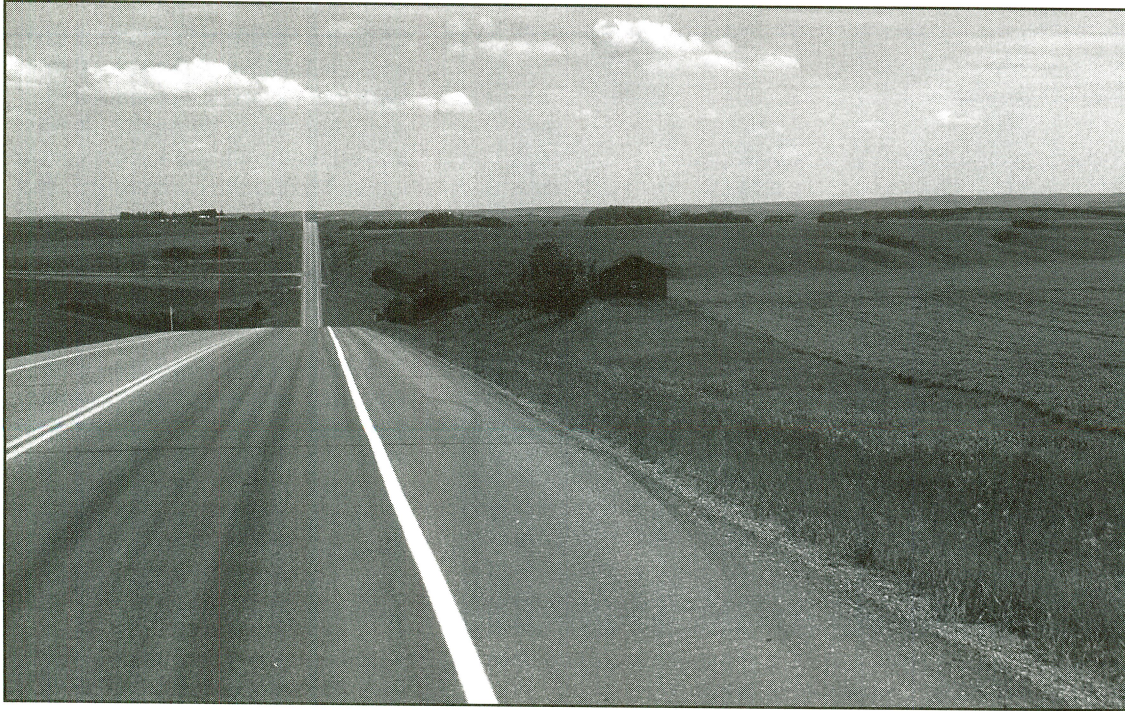
the marker for the grave of Christina Lehman, 1907. Next to it was one for Elias Wideman, 1904-1905, infant son of Abraham and Anna Hembling Wideman. It was indeed the burial site for the conservative Mennonite community. But it also contained the grave of Amos Bauman, who had joined the New Mennonites.

*Much of the information in the following article has been gleaned from Sweaty Brows and Breaking Plows. An equally exciting find was the diary of S. F. Coffman, who served the fledgling Mennonite settlements of the area for six months in 1901, and recorded many details concerning his experience.*

The eager travelers were seeking land they could possess. The opportunities of the Canadian Northwest had been heralded in Iowa at the turn of the century, and substantial numbers of settlers who had first tried Iowa were aboard the immigrant train. Homestead land was still available at \$10 for 160 acres, and by living on the land and developing it within three years, one could acquire ownership.<sup>1</sup> John K. and Susanna Lehman, ages 27 and 25, and their first child, 15-month-old Irene, were aboard the train. On board with them were John K.'s sister Catherine, 29, her husband, John Brubaker, and their family; the large Abraham Wideman family (Susanna's parents and siblings, including infant daughter, Mary Ann); and a single man, Milton Sitler. Cattle, household items, and families all traveled together on the same train. When milking time came, the cows were milked aboard the train, providing sustenance for the traveling families.

The weather was pleasant upon their arrival at Innisfail in the Northwest Territories on March 11, 1901, but the ground was still covered with two feet of wet snow.





*Today's highway disappears into a coulee, reappearing on the other side.*  
Credit: Beulah Stauffer Hostettler

Everything had to be taken off the train. Household goods, animals, and equipment had to be unloaded, with little accommodation for temporary storage. The land the Lehman-Wideman clan had filed for lay 17 miles southeast. The Mennonite settlers from Ontario that they knew about had settled south and somewhat west of the town, about 25 miles from the Iowa group's prospective location. The Lehmans, Widemans, and Brubakers would proceed directly to their own homestead sites. The women and children stayed at the crowded frontier hotel in Innisfail. The men assembled equipment and supplies in preparation to set out to claim their promised land.<sup>2</sup>

Crossing the flat, snow-covered miles was arduous; then, just before the men reached their designated homestead sites, a formidable coulee transversed the prairie. The deep ravine extended in both directions as far as eye could see. They wondered whether there was water at the bottom under the snow, and if so, how much. They had to cross it. They quickly realized the sleds would need to pass through one at a

time. The men needed to hold the sleds back, serving as human brakes as they went down into the ravine. To ascend the other side the horses needed to be double-teamed.

Wearily they attained the other side with all of their sleds, only to be confronted by a second coulee. The sight depressed the spirits, hope, and courage of the fledgling group. They would have to traverse those two coulees every time they needed supplies or wished to market produce. The men were wet and weary. They had no shelter other than their wagons. They chose a spot to camp and the next day proceeded to cross the second coulee and continue a short distance to the designated sites of their homesteads.

The wet snow was so deep that they could not find the surveyor's stakes. They chose a site they considered well within their domain, then decided to construct side-by-side a simple shack out of green lumber for each family. A few poplar trees dotted the landscape, and they were cut down to make window and door frames. When the snow melted, the shacks would

need to be moved to their appropriate sites.<sup>3</sup>

Several trips to and from Innisfail, across the coulees, were needed to bring in the families, furniture, and supplies. Mud followed the wet, melting snow. The trips were strenuous for the settlers, and especially so for their horses. The settlers were claiming land they could afford, but the indirect costs were high. Both man and beast were taxed to the limits of their strength every time the coulees needed to be crossed.

They named the settlement Mayton. As spring came their hopes brightened. They moved their shanties to their respective properties, and turned their attention to gardens and fields. The days were long, with daylight stretching from before 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Then snow came! On Monday, June 3, there was a thunderstorm, followed by hail that whitened the ground. Then the wind shifted from the southwest to the north, and the rain turned to snow. The storm continued the next day. By Wednesday morning the sun was shining, but the snow was eight inches deep!



For the next week stormy weather and intermittent snow continued. John K. Lehman, sitting in his house—if it could be called a house—was able to look through the cracks left by the shrinking green wood and see his father-in-law's place through the flying snow.<sup>4</sup> The coulees contained so much icy water they were almost impassable.

Eventually the weather improved, and wild flowers dotted the prairie. Soon strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, saskatoons, and chokecherries abounded. Game was plentiful.<sup>5</sup> Mosquitoes were so bad that the boys herding cows on the luxuriant grass often lay flat on the ground and covered their heads with their coats.<sup>6</sup> Yet the settlers were optimistic. They felt they could tame the land and make it their own.



*The genial Samuel Frederick Coffman (1872-1954), who, as a young temporary bishop, organized congregations at High River and Carstairs and served the congregation at Mayton.*  
Credit: The S. F. Coffman Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church.

Their religious circumstances were more tenuous. The Mayton settlers learned that the Ontario Mennonites had sent a preacher west to minister to their scattered members. Young Samuel Frederick Coffman, who turned 29 while on the prairie, spent his first months visiting families, preaching in schoolhouses, doing odd repairs, and collecting and pressing wild flowers. He regularly recorded his experiences in a diary. Gradually he won the confidence of the settlers from Ontario, and would eventually organize several congregations. Many of the Mayton settlers had left Ontario 15 years earlier, when they immigrated to Iowa. These same settlers, now coming from Iowa, felt a renewed kinship with the Ontario Mennonites since John and Susanna's recent visit. By July, Coffman sent word that he wished

to visit the settlement at Mayton.<sup>7</sup> Coffman represented the Ontario Mennonite Conference, from which the Stauffer Mennonites in Iowa had withdrawn, but the Mayton settlers were ready to receive him. When Coffman arrived he was met by Abraham Wideman and Amos Brubaker in Innisfail, then journeyed with them to Mayton. S. F. hoped to have a meeting with the group the following evening, but the weather was stormy, and

only John K. and Susanna came.

The following evening a group met at John K. Lehman's place. The cabin was simple and sparsely furnished, yet neat and somehow inviting. Lehman was a church member. He had been baptized in Ontario, but was not in "full standing" with the Iowa group. He was under censorship by them for his defiance of some of their regulations, but no one in the Mayton group doubted the sincerity of his commitment. Coffman's text at the meeting was Romans 12: 1 and 2. It was the standard text calling for separation from the world, but Coffman emphasized that its real thrust was the renewal of the mind. He spent the night with John and Susanna, his young contemporaries.

The next morning S. F. spent some time at the Lehman's, then wished to call on a neighboring Snyder family that lived on the other side of the coulee. John K. hitched up his ponies, but the rain had been heavy and the water in the coulee was too deep to cross. They drove around on the banks of the coulee a bit, S. F. noting that it contained nice building stone. He also found a few new specimens for his wild flower collection, which now numbered more than a hundred species gathered from the area. Toward evening John K. took S. F. to his sister Catherine and brother-in-law John Brubaker's place, where they had the evening meeting. S. F. noted in his diary that "A Russian from a German congregation in Dakota, Mr. Goe[r]tz, was also present. May God bless and prosper them in their unity."<sup>8</sup>

It was rainy again the following morning, but John K. drove S. F. the 17 miles to Innisfail with his buggy and ponies. Abraham Wideman accompanied them. S. F. used his umbrella to keep himself "relatively" dry. Coffman continued on to Calgary.<sup>9</sup>

In September, Coffman organized a congregation called Mount View at High River and another called West Zion near Carstairs. He



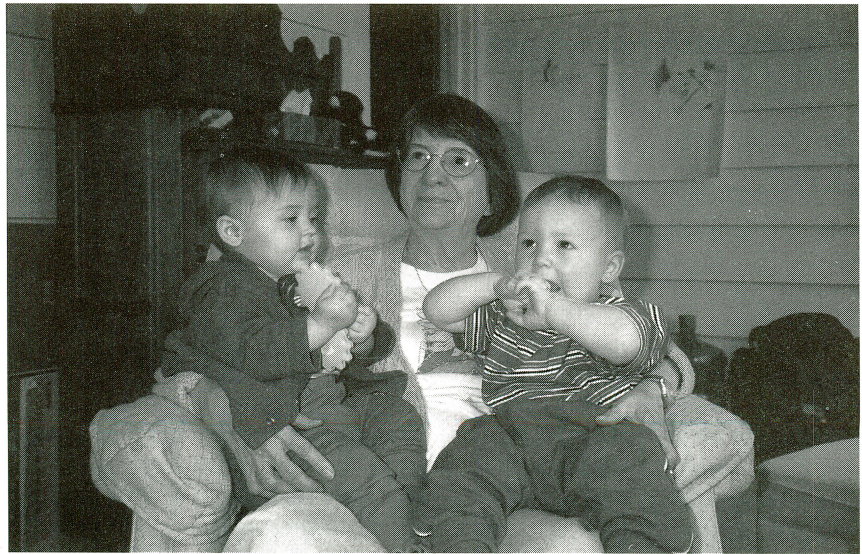
ordained both a minister and a deacon to serve them. This work accomplished, he determined to return to Mayton. The group had made application to unite with the Ontario Mennonite Conference.

Coffman and a companion set out early on October 11, and drove to Spruce Coulee, crossing it at Murray's ranch. From there they took a direct trail into the settlement and went to John Brubaker's, where they received breakfast. The next day they called at Abraham Widemans, then continued on to John K. and Susanna Lehmans. John K. gave Coffman a present of a badger skin.

A number of young people who had been unwilling to be baptized in Iowa now requested baptism. They included Susanna Wideman Lehman, and her siblings Martha and William. Joseph Brubaker, son of Amos, also wished to join the church.

On Sunday, October 13, the group met at Abraham Wideman's and S. F. spoke "along the lines of the first articles of the confession of faith as instruction for the candidates for baptism."<sup>10</sup> In the afternoon another service was held, where he spoke concerning the ordinances and bearing fruit. That evening Leah Brubaker also expressed her desire to unite with the group. S. F. then returned to the Carstairs area to finalize his work there before returning home to Ontario. He wanted to hold communion in each congregation before his departure.<sup>11</sup>

On Monday, November 4, 1901, S. F. Coffman, accompanied by Israel Shantz, again set out for Mayton. They stopped to take the noon meal with a Mennonite family en route, then continued on via the Edmonton trail to Colburn's ranch. From there they continued northeast to Burns' and Dugan's ranch, then northeast to Spruce Coulee. All went well until they tried to cross the water at the bottom of the coulee. In spite of every effort S. F. could muster, the tired and fearful



The author with grandchildren Naomi Hostetler and David Smucker.  
Credit: Beulah Stauffer Hostetler

ponies would not cross. So he waded through the water and walked to John K. Lehman's. Lehman came back to the coulee with a wagon, tied the ponies to it, and pulled them across.

On Tuesday the settlers gathered with S. F. to make arrangements for a baptismal service. Wednesday they gathered again, and further instruction was given to the baptismal candidates. In the afternoon Susanna Wideman Lehman, Leah Brubaker, Martha Wideman, and Ed Wideman were baptized. John K. Lehman was received upon his confession of faith. All of the members communed. It was a nice weekday and Will Wideman and Joe Brubaker had to be at work, but arrangements were made so they could also be baptized and received into the church. At long last the young people who had refused to bow to the idiosyncrasies of the Iowa bishop were embracing the church.

They were still without a leader. Preacher Amos Bauman was having difficulty getting along with his brother, Bishop Jesse Bauman, in the Iowa community, and it was rumored that he was thinking about Mayton. They would wait. *L*

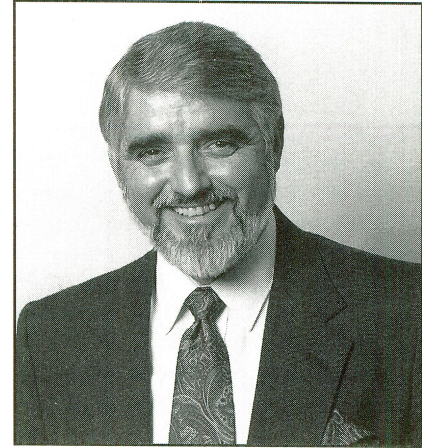
—Beulah Stauffer Hostetler, Goshen, Indiana, is author of *American Mennonites and Protestant Movements* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1987). This is a chapter from a forthcoming book, *Moving on: A Saga of Mennonite Migration*.

## Notes

1. *Sweaty Brows and Breaking Plows*, 1991, p. 2. Abraham Wideman Family Account.
2. Ibid. Also, II, 1-1. Northwest Mennonite Conference Papers. Stauffer, N. B. "Mennonites in Alberta," *Family Almanac*, ca. 1910 [no date].
3. Martha Sitler, "Milton Sitler," *Sweaty Brows and Breaking Plows*, p. 344.
4. "Lehman," *Sweaty Brows and Breaking Plows*. Also S. F. Coffman Diary, copy in Northwest Conference Papers, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.
5. Mary Belle Benedict, "Noah Gerber," *Sweaty Brows and Breaking Plows*, p. 224.
6. "John K. Lehman," *Sweaty Brows and Breaking Plows*, p. 282.
7. S. F. Coffman Diary, July 22, 1901.
8. Diary, July 25, 1901.
9. Ibid., July 26.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.



# What Is Your Humor Index?



by Jep Hostetler

Recently I received an article that was published originally in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and reprinted in the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, January 25, 1998. The author, Shella Taylor Wells, tells of her encounter with 35 dreary people in a dreary town in New Mexico. The byline read, "Don't substitute prudence for fun while on vacation." She watched as these dreary people shuffled into the café, ate their sandwiches, and sipped their vegetable-noodle soup. She says, "I never saw a more joyless bunch of travelers." Then she noticed the logo on their bus, "Prudent Tours." Turns out that Prudent Tours is a Mennonite operation. What does this say about Mennonites in general regarding their sense of joy or humor? Does it say anything at all or was this just a very difficult day and the folks were expecting steaks and received soup and sandwiches instead?

Do you have a sense of humor? If I were to meet you face to face and ask you this question, how would you respond? It is an interesting question because the answer depends on one's understanding of what it means to have a sense of humor. If you grew up in an environment where laughter, joy, and celebration were part of your daily routine, your answer would no doubt be different from someone who grew up in a family where difficult times, pessimism, and a sense of defeat persisted through childhood.

Two main factors contribute to your sense of humor. First, genetics. Yes. A recent study by a Harvard professor suggests that lighthearted folks are lighthearted by birth. About 50 percent of their attitude is due to genetic predisposition. Dour or sour persons, on the other hand, are sour for the same reason; they have a genetic predisposition. Thus, if you give lighthearted folks difficult times and sorrowful situations, within about six months to a year, they will be back to their lighthearted selves. On the other hand, if you give dour folks large amounts of money, vacations, health, and friends, within six months to a year, they will be sour

all over again. Second, nurture. A sense of humor can be developed, encouraged, and strengthened over time. When a family laughs easily, shares emotions, and has a great time celebrating, it is easier to learn how to be lighthearted. So the combination of genetics and environment, the old nature versus nurture, contributes to your humor quotient.

What is your humor index score? Take the following survey and obtain a small indication regarding how much permission you had, as a developing youngster, to participate in humor events.

## Hostetler Humor Index - 1999 - Part I

*(Not to be used for other than personal use without written permission)*

### ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

1 for **HARDLY EVER** or **NEVER**; 3 for **SOMETIMES**;  
5 for **VERY OFTEN** or **ALWAYS**

### During my childhood and adolescent years:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I had permission to laugh out loud.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I can remember specific incidences when I laughed out loud.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ My mother, or adult female caretaker, laughed out loud.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ My father, or adult male caretaker, laughed out loud.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Our household had a sense of humor, either noisy or quiet.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ There was a sense of optimism in our family or household.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ We celebrated birthdays, anniversaries, or other significant milestones.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoyed harmless practical jokes.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ We had a pet in our home.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ We sang, danced, or played together, either as a partial or whole family.



11. \_\_\_\_\_ Mealtime was a fun time at our house.  
 12. \_\_\_\_\_ We ate ice cream.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total this section**

If you scored 12 to 24, you probably had little permission to exhibit your lighthearted side. If you scored 25 to 36, you most likely had permission to join in mirth at least once in a while. If you scored 37 to 48, you had a fairly light-hearted childhood. If you scored 49 to 60, you definitely had a lot of permission to participate in humor events.

Do not take your score too seriously. This is not a scientific instrument. It is simply an indication of what you experienced during your growing up years in terms of your humor identity.


Humor includes a wide range of activities from laughter to celebration. In following columns I will be looking at your index as it relates to your current sense of humor and how you maintain lightheartedness. I also will be discussing the difference between humor and joy.

Send me your Mennonite humor. I'd love to hear from you. Send it via e-mail to: Hostetler.2@osu.edu

—Jep Hostetler, Ph.D., Columbus, Ohio, is a humor consultant. He has taught in the Ohio State University Medical School and is currently executive secretary of the Mennonite Medical Association.

### **Wilmer Swope, Leetonia, Ohio, wrote in response to Jep's October 1998 column:**

*"My double Brenneman cousin, Charles A. Brenneman of Elida, Ohio, a descendant of Bishop Brenneman, told me of a time when John M. Brenneman did laugh: 'On his farm (or a nearby farm) Brenneman observed a sheep climbing up an outside straw stack. Halfway up, the sheep tumbled off the stack. But the sheep wouldn't give up; it kept trying to climb to the top and kept tumbling back down.'"*

*"My thoughts about Brenneman's aversion to laughing are that there was something about human jokes and antics which must have been related to pride in Brenneman's spiritual thinking. Human efforts at levity would certainly not have been in his understanding of humility." *

# **Managing Mennonite Memory: Goshen College, 1894-**

*(Third in a Series)*

**by Dennis Stoesz, Archivist**

In the last column, I wrote about how East Goshen Mennonite Church is working with its congregational records (October 1998). In this column I review records management at Goshen College.

## **Record Schedules**

The question that I am testing in this series of articles is whether a records schedule can be a useful tool for working with active, non-current, and archival records. I have come across only one or two Mennonite organizations that use such schedules.

Currently, the Mennonite Church provides its boards and agencies with *Guidelines for Retention and Disposition of Records* (1989). Although it is a more general philosophical statement, it points to the heart of the matter in its opening paragraph:

Records are important. However, the long-range retention of all records is not important. Since not all records have equal value, discretion must be exercised in determining what records are retained, what records are destroyed, where records are located, who becomes the archivist for non-current records, and what are the archival functions.

My proposal is that creating such a records schedule would help managers decide which records are retained and which are destroyed. A schedule is basically a list of existing records. These records include (a) those currently being used in the offices, (b) those inactive files found in closets or in specified storage areas,



and (c) those permanent archival files found in a vault or in an archives. Next to each sets of records on this list is the decision on how long these records are to be retained, one-two years, three-ten years, or permanently. The *Guidelines* document affirms my proposal: "the person in charge of records management at each institution needs to set up retention schedules for all materials based on the *Guidelines*."

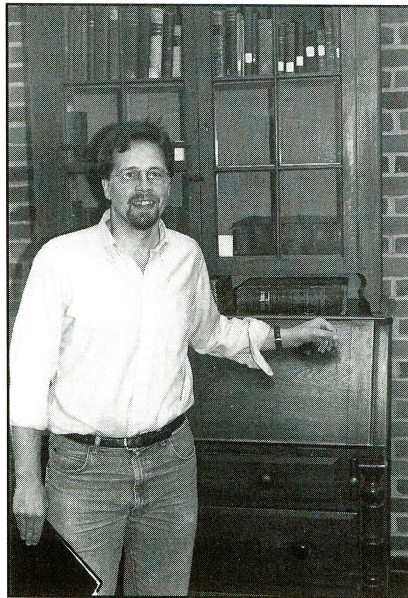
As one who works with older records, I tend to keep things. I have seen too many old and valuable records destroyed. In talking with someone recently who works at managing current files, I learned that she tended to throw things away. Too many records can become a burden, especially in this information age. So what would help us "keepers" and "throwers" to work together? I believe a records schedule would help govern both the retention and disposition of records.

At the fall meeting of the Society of Indiana Archivists, I tested the idea of using record schedules with four other archivists. The result was a tie: two to two. Two archivists were in favor of such schedules and were using them in their specific organizations. The other two archivists thought there were other ways to manage records. One pointed to the problem that offices did not use such schedules even if they were created. Another archivist said that a more general agreement with each organization that donated records to the archives was sufficient.

I broke the tie by voting in favor of using record schedules (this is, after all, what I am proposing!). The real test will come when we see how such schedules work. Will such schedules help us manage records through their life cycle from active use, to non-current status, to destruction, or to their designation as permanent archival files? This is what I have called the three-five-year experiment.

In what follows, I am giving you

a window into how one organization, Goshen College, is currently working with its records.



*John D. Roth, director of the Mennonite Historical Library, standing in front of the desk of S. D. Guengerich (1836-1929).*

## Survey of Goshen College's Records

In 1990, John D. Roth, director of the Mennonite Historical Library, asked a history practicum student, Steve Nolt, to survey the college's

records. It was timely since Goshen College was preparing to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1994.

Nolt identified records at three different locations: (a) Mennonite Historical Library, 174 sets of records; (b) Union Building basement, 168 sets of records; and (c) Archives of the Mennonite Church, Newcomer Center, 176 sets of records. Nolt also identified 24 artifacts in the Mennonite Museum Committee's collection. In addition, 23 sets of older records were housed in 15-20 different departments on campus.

Nolt concluded that "the school needs to . . . plan for archival storage for Goshen College's second century." While the holdings at the Mennonite Historical Library and the Archives of the Mennonite Church were clearly identified, the biggest need focussed on the materials housed in the Union basement.

## The Union Basement, 1948-1982

The basement of the Union Building was first designated as a "Temporary Archives for Goshen College" in 1948. The Union had just been built, and the college wanted to establish a more permanent place for its non-current records. The initiative came from



*New shelving built 1997-98 in the middle room of the Union Basement Archives. Each shelf can hold three two-foot banker boxes.*



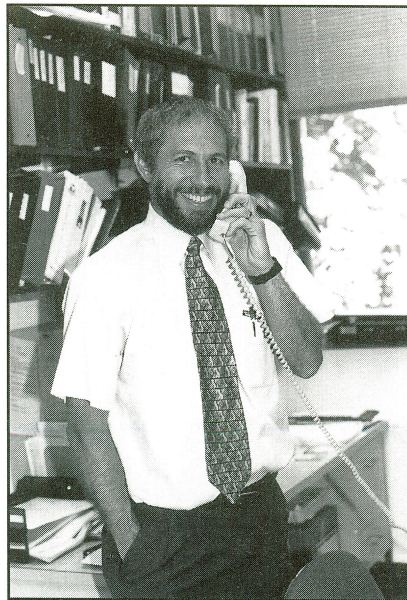
Business Manager C. L. Graber and two faculty members, John Umble and Guy F. Hershberger. Before this the records had been stored in the old railway sub-station.

This repository was to be a place "to receive . . . all materials no longer currently needed in the official files of Goshen College faculty and officers." Curator Nelson Springer, now retired from the Mennonite Historical Library, did much of the cataloging.

The minutes of that 1948 meeting also state that it be "a fixed policy to destroy nothing in the official files of the College faculty and officers, and that when any material is no longer needed it be turned over to the temporary archives." After the materials were transferred to the basement and identified, decisions would be made about their final retention and disposition.

Two rooms in the Union basement came to be designated for specific offices. Room A housed the papers from the President's Office, Dean's Office, College Relations, and Teacher Education Department. Room B housed records from the Business Office, Personnel Office, Registrar's Office, and the Bookstore.

After several decades, these two rooms were full and overflowing. By the early 1980s, an "Ad Hoc Committee Concerning Archival Storage and Space" was set up to respond to this situation. Under the guidance of Provost John A. Lapp, Chairman Kenneth King, and Business Manager J. Robert Kreider, it was decided that the presidents' papers be moved to the Archives of the Mennonite Church in Newcomer Center. This included the papers of presidents from Noah E. Byers (1903-1913) to J. L. Burkholder (1903-1982). Once they were transferred, Archivist Leonard Gross took the initiative to have the early presidential papers organized and listed. By the 1990s, however, the two rooms were again full and overflowing, and something needed to be done.



*James L. Histan, vice president for finance, in his office in the Administration Building.*

## Vice President for Finance/Business Manager

Organizations look to different officers for managing their records. In the case of Goshen College, it has been the business manager. Today that officer is James Histan, vice president for finance. Other persons who have occupied this position are C. L. Graber (1924-1927, 1933-1949), Leland Bachman (1949-1957), Ralph Gunden (1957-1970), J. Robert Kreider (1971-1986), and Mardene Kelley (1988-1997).

During the 1990s, Business Manager Mardene Kelley took steps to deal with the accumulation of records in the Union basement. When Jim Histan came into the office in 1997, he implemented the building of additional shelving in the middle part of the basement. This new shelving more than doubled the space available.

## Summer Project, 1998, Union Basement Archives

With the new shelving in place, Histan hired Rachel Rupright in the spring of 1998 to bring some order to the records. Rupright had seen the need for this when she worked as an administrative assistant to the president and had transferred inactive presidents' records to the Union basement.

Rupright worked throughout the summer to identify the various sets of records. One goal was to establish a connection between the records and the department that had placed them. Another goal of the project was to designate specific shelf space for each department. This was to counteract the general feeling that the Union basement was not a place one would want to visit.

In the fall 1998, Histan reported that, not only was the Union basement organized, but that each administrative and academic department on campus would be given space for nine boxes of materials. The shelves were built so that three two-foot banker boxes could fit on each shelf.



*Rachel Rupright in front of new shelving in the Union Basement Archives, summer 1998.*





*The Union Building, circa 1960s. The basement room designated for the "Goshen College Archives" in 1948, and still used today, is located underneath the game room on the right side of this picture. Source: Goshen College Public Relations Photograph Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church.*

Histand also raised several good questions: "How should departments regularize their archival processes? What are the kinds of things that should be kept in that space? What kinds of things should be either destroyed, not kept at all, or culled out after a period of time? How long should stuff be kept in the Union basement before it is transferred to the Archives of the Mennonite Church?"

My general answer to Histand's questions is to point to the use of a records schedule. The first step would be for each office to list its records as found (a) in their offices, (b) in the Union basement, and (c) in the Archives.

The second step would be to go over this listing and make decisions about what records should be destroyed and what records should be kept for the long term. Part of this answer includes having someone work with each department on such a schedule. Another part is for someone to work with the records during their inactive stage in the Union basement.

## John S. Umble Center and Other Departments

Even though the Union basement was the central repository for the college's older records, some departments stored inactive records in their offices. One example is the

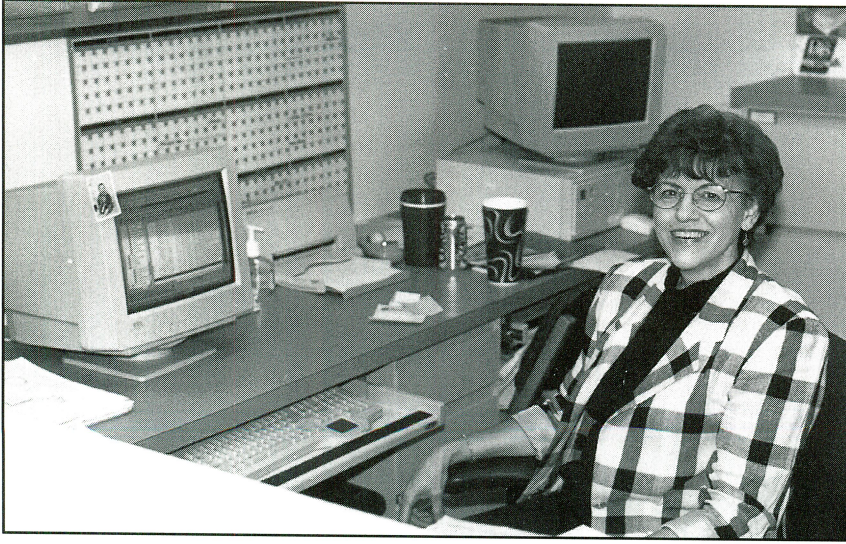
Communication and Theater Department.

In the summer of 1996, Gerald Pauls, technical director and house manager of the John S. Umble Center, asked me what to do with all the old boxes of records he had found in the orchestra pit. After



*Al Albrecht (left) and Gerald Pauls working through the old records of the Communication and Theater Department, spring 1999. The boxes were found in the orchestra pit of the John S. Umble Center.*





*Nancy J. Miller at her desk in the Academic Dean's Office in the Administration Building. Here she is showing on her computer screen how the electronic records of this department are organized.*

examining a few items from the pile of 20-30 banker boxes, I concluded they were the official files of this department. These records dated back to the time when Roy H. Umble served as professor of communication, 1946-1983.

I suggested that a first step would be to identify the dates and series of records found in the boxes. This initial survey would provide handles on how to tackle this mound of material. The files could then be transferred into new two-foot banker boxes.

Pauls picked up this work again in spring 1999. This time he had the help of Alfred J. Albrecht, who served as professor of communication at the College from 1964 to 1987. Albrecht was concerned that the history of this department be preserved and known. He also brought a keen interest and knowledge to the task.

Records from several other departments and programs have also been identified: the Center for Discipleship, 1962-1982; Division of Nursing, 1954-1997; English Department, 1930-1970; Hispanic Ministries, 1979-1990; Home Economics Department, 1926-1988; Information Technology Services-

Media, 1950s-1990s; Lecture-Music Series, 1905-1985; Music Department; Peace Society, 1935-1981; Peace Studies Program, 1970-1997; Public Relations, 1940s-1990s; Student Development Division, 1944-1974; Student Organizations; Women's Studies Program, 1975-1998; and the Weather Station, 1915-1998.

## **Mennonite Historical Library and Archives of the Mennonite Church**

Steve Nolt's 1990 survey also identified two other places on campus that contained historical materials.

Nolt identified 174 sets of material at the Mennonite Historical Library, which is located on the third floor of the Good Library. Rather than listing the books that were published by the college or contained information about the college, he concentrated on (a) the published periodicals that the college has produced since 1894, (b) the vertical files of items collected by the library, and (c) the photograph collection. Also included were the artifacts in the Museum Collection, housed at the Historical

Library.

At the Archives of the Mennonite Church, located in the Newcomer Center, Nolt identified 176 sets of materials: personal papers of 19 persons, who had taught or were students at the college; 14 photograph collections; many historical sound recordings; artifacts; official records of the college, such as the Elkhart Institute Collection, 1894-1903; the Presidential Papers, 1903-1982; Faculty Minutes, 1901-1981; Board of Overseers; Building Committees; etc.

Although quite a few of the college's historical records have ended up at the Historical Library or the Archives of the Mennonite Church, the impetus for managing the college's active and non-current records rests with the college's administration.

## **Electronic Records**

One of the newest developments at the college has been to tackle the question of how an organization archives its electronic records. The initiative came from Nancy J. Miller, assistant to the academic dean, in 1998 when she requested that all official minutes of committees be sent to her by electronic mail.

Academic Dean Paul Keim asked, "Why work in both the paper and electronic medium?" This department is committed to work in the electronic medium as much as possible. Nancy said there has been a good response to her request.

Through the efforts of Curator Joe Springer of the Mennonite Historical Library, the use of electronic records was discussed at a special ad hoc meeting in September 1998. After hearing the report from the academic dean's office, the next question was "How do we archive these computer files that contain the official minutes of committees?" Keim wondered if there wasn't a place where they could "once a year dump all the electronic files."

Michael Sherer, director of the



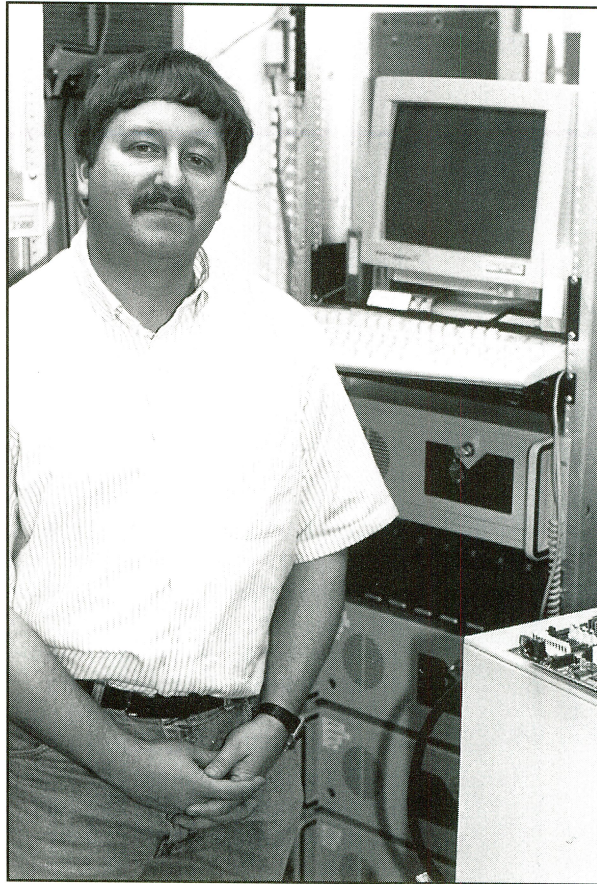
Information Technology Services, indicated that the up-and-coming medium was the World Wide Web. It would be fairly easy to establish a centralized archival site on the Web server, which could be called [archives.goshen.edu](http://archives.goshen.edu)

This archival site could be managed in such a way that departments could continue to access their inactive computer files. Each department's files would remain restricted to that department until the records had become archival, maybe 10-30 years down the road. The records that have been marked "archival" could be transferred to the public archives section of the Web server, where they could be accessed. The computer data at this site would be migrated into newer software and hardware when they become available, so the information would continue to be preserved.

Sherer also talked about the new [mennonite.net](http://mennonite.net) site on the Web, which serves over a 1,000 Mennonite congregations. In addition to the college, congregations can also archive electronic documents.

John E. Sharp, director of the Historical Committee and Archives of the Mennonite Church, indicated that the archives is committed to working at this question of archiving electronic records. The Historical Committee is currently raising funds to place older historical documents on the Web so that researchers will have direct access to them.

I have to confess that this computer language and technology is new to me. The question of managing files, however, seems to be similar to working with paper records, photographs, tapes, and artifacts. Having an archives site on the Web actually reminds me of what the Goshen College archives committee decided back in 1948 when they established a centralized archives place in Union basement. I am sure that committee could not imagine that 50 years later the college would consider a centralized electronic




*Michael Sherer standing in front of the computers that service the Web pages for [goshen.edu](http://goshen.edu) and [mennonite.net](http://mennonite.net), spring 1999. The offices of ITS (Information Technology Services) are also located in the Union basement.*

archives site or that this site would also be located in the Union basement.

## Conclusions

I hope I have been able to provide you with a window into Goshen College's record management. As I wrote the article, I felt that I was sometimes a participant and sometimes an observer. I am sure the participant part comes out of my excitement at seeing the college move ahead on various fronts and from my desire to test the idea of using a records schedule.

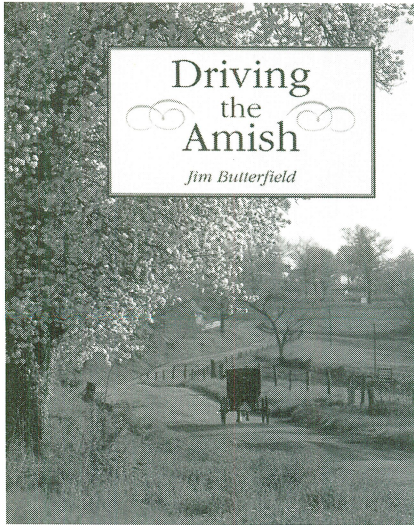
What are some of your experiences in working with records in your organizations, committees, or boards? Do you have suggestions or answers to the questions that have been raised in this article? I hope to continue this discussion in the October 1999 issue of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*. 

## Correction:

Iva L. Yoder, Mill Creek, Pennsylvania, makes the following correction (which the author had corrected, but the editor missed) to Paton Yoder's article in the October 1998 issue of MHB: "On page 7, Paton Yoder states that John A. Hostetler is married to Samuel Detweiler's older sister. In fact, Samuel is an only child and has no sister! Actually, Samuel is married to John's oldest sister, Lizzie."



# Book Reviews



*Driving the Amish* by Jim Butterfield, Herald Press, 1997, 112 pp., \$12.99

*The Amish and Their Neighbours: The German Block, Wilmot Township, 1822-1860*, by Lorraine Roth, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 1998, 118 pp., \$18.

## By Dale Bowman

*Driving the Amish* springs to life in the opening paragraph with the birth of a baby, Emma. The book's author, who goes by the pen name of Jim Butterfield, is an experienced newspaper writer, and it shows. Told in everyday language, *Driving the Amish* (\$12.99, Herald Press) recounts the details of daily life among the Amish of Holmes County, Ohio, as they are observed by one of their drivers.

A second book, *The Amish and Their Neighbours: The German Block, Wilmot Township, 1822-1860*, by Lorraine Roth, tells an old story: immigration to a New World by a religious group. Written as a histo-

ry, *The Amish and Their Neighbours* (\$18, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario) uncovers the dilemmas of different religious groups carving out a life in the wilderness near Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. The plot includes a detective story: "Why did [Christian Nafziger] choose the undeveloped lands west of Waterloo, as his 'promised land'?"

*Driving the Amish* is a read; *The Amish and Their Neighbours* is a study. One 20th-century Amish phenomenon of note is how the group has adapted to the introduction of the automobile. One coping mechanism has been to employ paid drivers. In some places, the drivers are licensed as taxi operators. Some neighbors and friends do a sideline business of driving the Amish. Some driving for the Amish is simply neighborliness. Whatever Jim Butterfield's real reason for driving the Amish, he has found a rich method of documenting their day-to-day existence. He tells his story through vignettes, on everything from birthing, to farm work, to religion, to weddings, to funerals. This kind of breadth might suffice, but in *Driving the Amish*, Butterfield even includes a short, tangential chapter on the Amish and income tax.

Butterfield shows himself throughout as a writer who is a good watcher. Since the book opens with a birth, I expected it to close with a funeral. It doesn't; the funeral appears in the next to last chapter. The book closes with preparations for a wedding, and the final scene is one of the well-watched details that makes *Driving the Amish* a good read. "When I turned to go, there beside the window was a long row of shoes—all sizes, men's and women's. And there with a stained cloth was a four-year-old girl, busily rubbing black polish all over them."

Lorraine Roth's *The Amish and Their Neighbours* could use a bit more sifting of its wealth of detail. At times, I felt as I read as if a wheelbarrow filled with everything from deeds to deaths had been dumped in my lap. But if your fam-

ily tree includes a Beck, Jutzi, Hunsberger, Shantz, Gingerich, Nafziger, Eby, Lichti, Erb, Schultz, Schwartzentruber, Brenneman, or Kropf, then the history is worth sifting through. I am certain this book will be the definitive work on the area known in Canada as the German Block. Mixed in with the literal descriptions of building types, listings of occupations, and minutes of meetings are such gems as this from the section titled "The Contribution of Women in the New Settlement":

"An anonymous emigrant had the following advice: 'Let every man who has a wife and who intends to settle in Canada, bring her with him; and let him who has not the article and can get it good, and of a suitable temper, etc., provide himself before he starts; but mind, she must neither be a fine lady, nor one who cannot help, or has no resources within herself.'"

While such advice may be hilarious in 1999, *The Amish and Their Neighbours* amply documents that the right kind of wife, like the right kind of attitude, could make the difference in a tough land. The wilderness that Christian Nafziger found was not turned into tillable land and a democratic society by people of a retiring sort. A toughness was required to wade through the bureaucratic nightmares involved between groups with different languages and customs. It takes a toughness to work through the book, too, but the story is worth it. Finally, I have a quibble with each book.

Having grown up in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as tourism exploded into a multi-million dollar industry, I may be oversensitive to the notion of the Amish being cute. But *Driving the Amish* feels like it is aimed at a tourist market: the Amish as the quaint ones. Then again, Herald Press probably wasn't

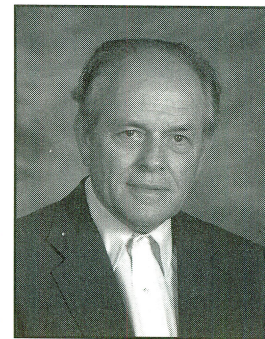
*Continued on page 16*



# Vision and History: Telling Our Story

*A Conference Resourcing Mennonite Interpretive Centers  
to be held at the Mennonite Information Center, Berlin, Ohio  
Friday-Saturday, September 17-18, 1999  
Sponsored by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church*

In addition to provocative plenary sessions with John L. Ruth as keynote speaker, concurrent sessions are planned around the following tracks:



*John L. Ruth:  
historian, author,  
videographer,  
storyteller, pastor*

## **Track 1: Pragmatic Issues for Centers**

Topics: finances, infrastructure, and public relations  
Primary Audience: executive directors, board members

## **Track 2: Telling the Story**

Topics: program development and implementation  
Primary Audience: center staff, program directors, and committees

## **Theme 3: The Community and the Information Center**

Topics: the community represented and served by the center  
Primary Audience: pastors, teachers, and church agency staff



Continued from page 14

looking for a tell-all. But maybe they should be. If we don't tell our own darker stories, the reporters of ABC's 20/20 and their ilk will.

*The Amish and Their Neighbours* could have benefitted from sharper pinpointing of its audience. The book will only be read by historians and history buffs of the area around Waterloo or by genealogy fanatics. But the book contains short insets with good, solid information on everything from Amish Mennonites to the products of the maple tree. If intended for a general audience, the story would benefit from a focus on

personalities instead of history.

*The Amish and Their Neighbours* unearths the nitty-gritty of the politics and actual costs of carving a life from the wilderness in the New World. *Driving the Amish* accumulates daily bits to build a history from an outsider's perspective on the world's most stable Amish community in the 20th century. *The Amish and Their Neighbours* is a broader, richer study than *Driving the Amish*, but a tougher read. One book goes by the nightstand; the other belongs in the study or den.

—Dale Bowman, a Chicago journalist, writes the "Outdoor" column for

the Chicago Sun-Times. He and his family attend Evanston Mennonite Church." 

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## Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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# MIENNONITE

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No. 3

## Why Don't We Tell the Beginning of the Story? Native Americans Were Here First



*At the western terminus of the Trail of Death, Native Americans were deprived of their new lands also. This Cheyenne village near Darlington, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), was the site of the first General Conference Mennonite mission, 1888. Samuel S. and Susie L. (Hirschler) Haury were the church's first "foreign" missionaries to the Native Americans. Thinking that white Mennonites would make good neighbors, missionary H. J. Kliever recruited them to join the 100,000 "boomers" who invaded Indian Territory in a series of U.S. government giveaways, 1889-1893. Some of these settlers in 1891 established the Mennoville Mennonite Church near El Reno, the first in the Territory. (Credit: Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas.)*

by Rich H. Meyer

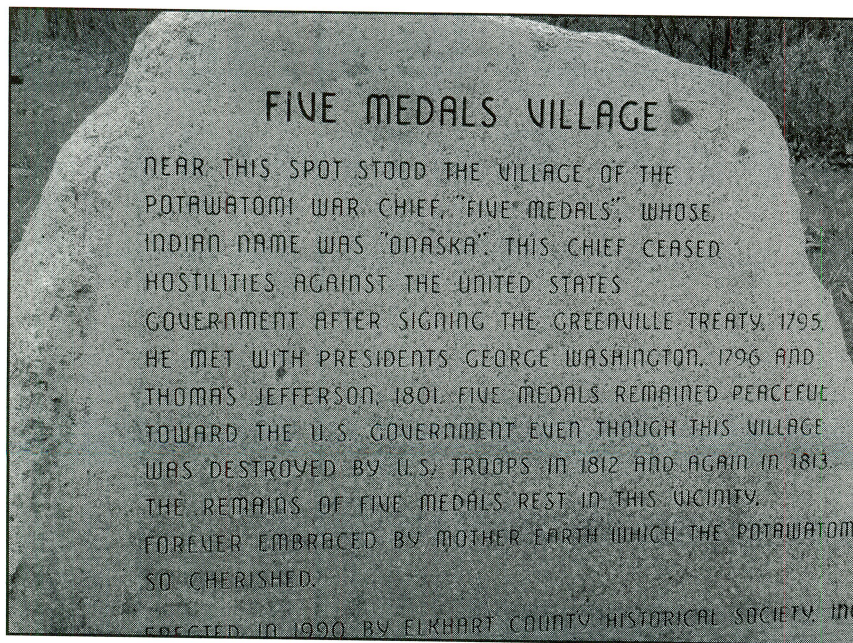
A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. However, it is the storyteller who decides where the narrative begins.

I worked with Mennonite Central Committee in southern Africa in the early 1980s. At that time, the official version of South African history began in the 17th century, and it began with an unpopulated land, belonging to no one. This beginning then set the stage for the story of the settling of the land by European immigrants.

More recently, I have been studying the history of Israel/Palestine. As a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams, I work with Israelis and Palestinians to protect the homes of West Bank Palestinians from demolition by the Israeli government. These demolitions are in part an attempt to bring the facts into line with the Zionist movement story of this land, which begins like this: "A land of no people for a people with no land."<sup>2</sup> Over 400 Palestinian villages were obliterated and more today are "unrecognized" in an attempt to tell the story in a particular way.

Where do we begin our stories? Consider these two quotes from different articles in one recent *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*: "Kuntz owned the farm for 50 years, renting it to various tenants. He had bought it from Peter Gfeller, and in 1856 Gfeller had bought it from the original owner, John B. Neuenschwander."<sup>3</sup> Or this: "The migration of the Amish and Amish-Mennonites to this northern part of Michigan occurred at the turn of this century. The land had been cleared of timber by the lumber companies in the latter part of the 19th century, and the companies





*Five Medals Village marker at Baintertown, corner of CR 29 and CR 42, three miles south of Goshen. (Credit: John E. Sharp.)*

were encouraging people to buy and settle the land. First, Amish migrants from Indiana . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Where we choose to begin telling our story creates a version of the story, in these cases a version that rather abruptly cuts out earlier actors, ignoring their story.

In the first case above, Peter Gfeller bought the land in question from John Neuenschwander less than a decade after the United States government created the title deed at a land sale in Des Moines. The land sale was held a few years after the Army took possession from the Sauk and Fox Indians.

This in turn was only two years after the United States Army built Fort Des Moines for the express purpose of protecting the Indians from encroaching white settlement, in an attempt to minimize conflict.<sup>5</sup>

## What Have We Lost?

A quick survey of articles in the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* reveals that about one-third touch on the origins of Amish-Mennonite (or related) settlements in the Americas. What does it do to our story to omit mention of the displaced Indian tribes, the treaties by

which they were dispossessed, or where their descendants might be found today?<sup>6</sup>

First, we are often not aware of the proximity in time between the dispossession of the Indians and the establishment of Mennonite communities. How often were we the immediate beneficiaries? How often did we discreetly enter the story of the land a few years later? Perhaps in most cases, speculators bought the land from the government, and Mennonites bought the land a few transactions later. To become aware, we will have to tell the stories from an earlier point of view.

This is not an attempt to determine "original" ownership. The concept does not seem helpful to me. It is about understanding the relationships of our forbears and our communities' founders to the dramatic cultural conquest taking place around them at the time.<sup>7</sup>

In the second article quoted above, the Amish and Mennonites entered at the turn of the century, onto land that the Chippewa ceded at the Treaty of Isabella in 1864. But John Neuenschwander of Polk County, Iowa, clearly arrived there before the dust had settled from the retreating Indians.<sup>8</sup> James Juhnke<sup>9</sup> notes that hundreds of Mennonites joined the invading boomers when the Indian Territory was opened in 1889 and after. Enough arrived so that by the time Oklahoma became a state in 1907 there were 37 white Mennonite congregations there. He

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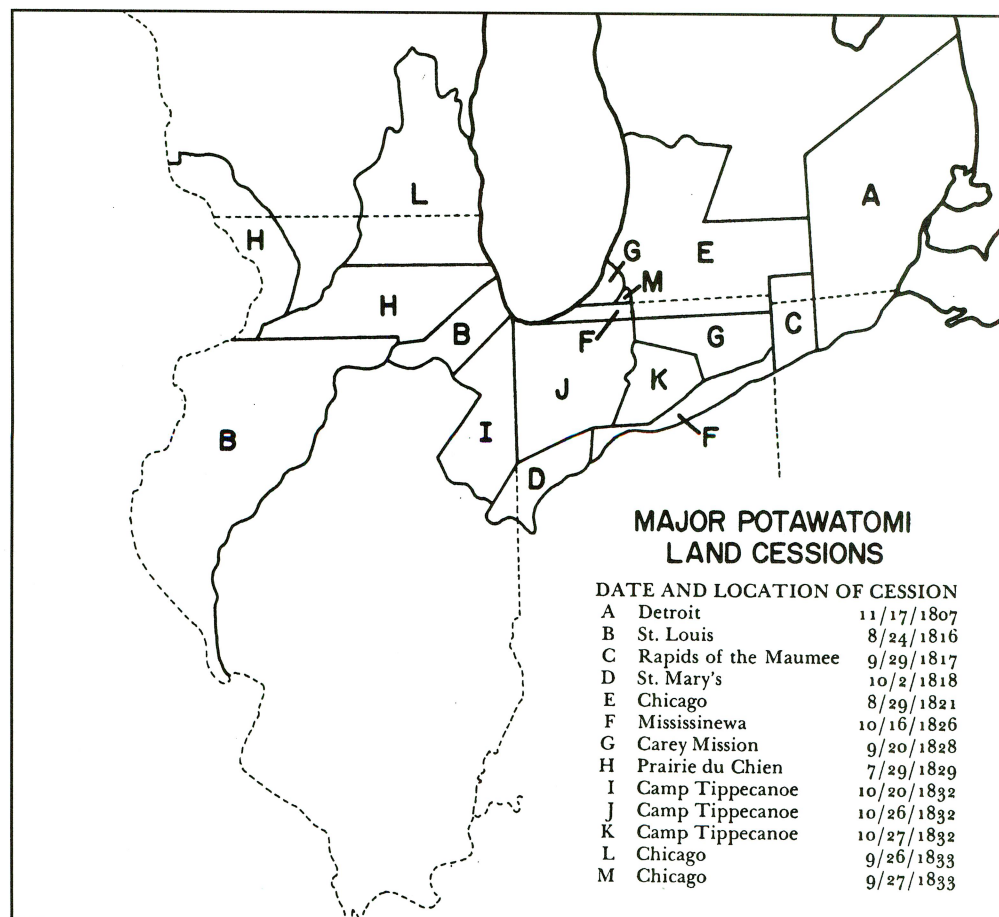
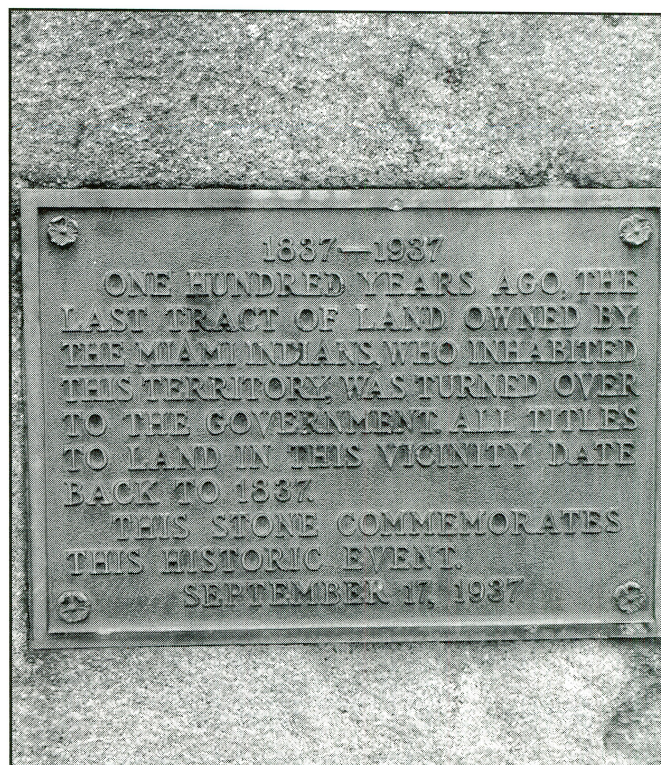


cites two cases where early Mennonite missionaries to the Indians staked private claims in the land rush, and subsequently resigned from direct mission work.<sup>10</sup>

We were in many places unquestionably such a part of the encroaching white settlement that the Indians and, on occasion, the federal government saw us as a threat to the Indians.<sup>11</sup> Unless we, the storytellers, make this vital connection, our readers will not consider how our possession was tied to the Indians' dispossession. It is only when we see this connection that the next questions come to mind: How did our forbears relate to the Indians? How did they think of land rights and land tenure? Did they perceive an injustice in what was happening to the Indians?

Second, omitting all mention of our Indian predecessors contributes to the ongoing denial of their exis-

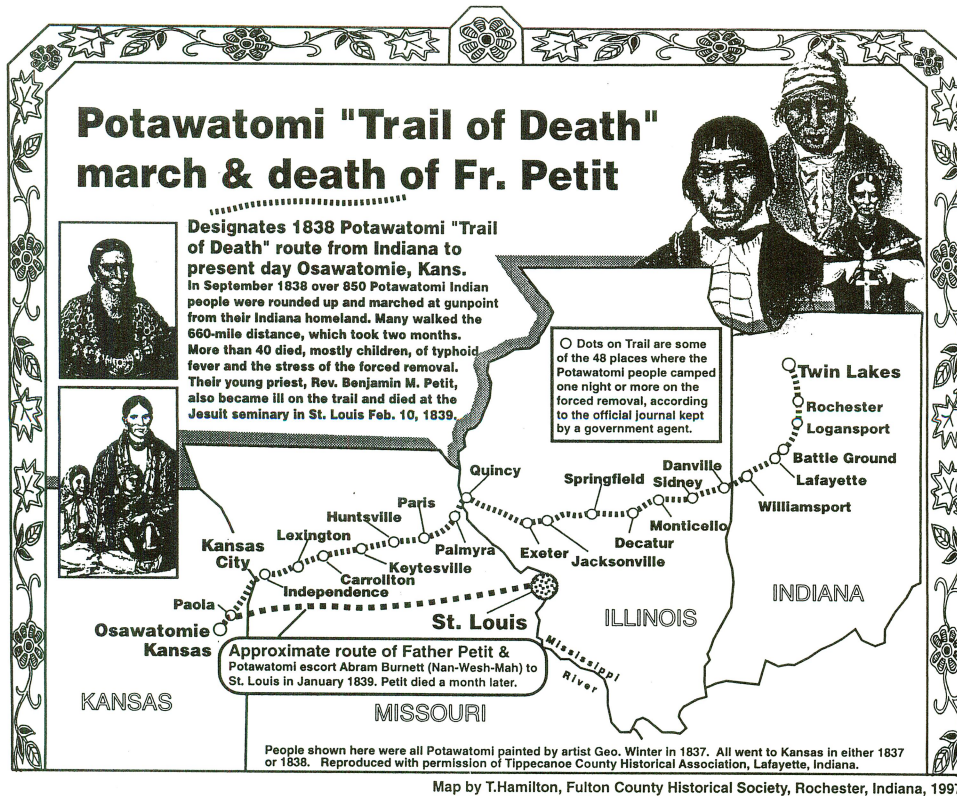
*The last Miami land cession in northern Indiana, 1837, is marked at Syracuse Lakeside Park. One year later Swiss Mennonites settled around Berne, Adams County, Indiana, south-east of Syracuse. (Credit: John E. Sharp.)*



*Map showing the lost inheritance of the Potawatomi Indians, 1807-1833. Most of Elkhart and Lagrange counties were given up in the Treaty of Carey Mission, September 20, 1828.*

*(Credit: Edmunds, R. David, The Potawatomi Indians, Keepers of the Fire, University of Oklahoma Press, 1978, p. 245. Reproduced by permission.)*





*The Potawatomi Trail of Death shows the route of the disinherited Potawatomis, who were forced at gunpoint to leave their homeland in northern Indiana in 1838. That same year Swiss Mennonites settled in Adams and Wells counties, and Mennonites from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia settled in Hamilton County, between Kokomo and Indianapolis.*

*(Credit: Map by T. Hamilton, Fulton County Historical Society, Rochester, Indiana, 1997. Used by permission.)*

tence and claims. In the same way that white South Africans and Zionists did not want to acknowledge the existence of prior inhabitants and their claims to the land, the United States government is at best inconsistent in recognizing the

claims of Indian nations.

In the young United States, commissioners dealing with Indians prior to 1787 operated under the theory that the United States had conquered the Indians in the Revolutionary War and therefore

already held title to the land. Stiff resistance by an intertribal confederacy convinced Congress that reliance on a claim of conquest would result in a long, bloody, and expensive war. Backing away from that claim in the Northwest

### Early accounts describe Potawatomi people as:

- stocky
- liked practical jokes
- women modest
- most activities (games) had spiritual significance
- wore hair long except during war when they shaved their head except for a small scalp lock
- women, single braid down their back; considered tribal historians
- both made jewelry, excelled in beadwork
- polygamous, single male marrying two or more sisters
- cross-cousin marriage encouraged
- domed wigwams (woven brush); winter more tightly constructed
- farmed wild rice, maple syrup, corn
- men expected to develop close relationship with sisters' sons
- grave a hollowed out tree or four foot grave
- believed departed soul traveled to the west, assisted by Chibiabos
- entrance of French: dependence on trade goods enriched and destroyed Potawatomi culture

(Notes from *Trail of Death: The Story of the Forced Removal of Potawatomi Indians from Indiana to Kansas in 1838*. Video, 1992, 27 minutes, color. Available from Wayne Harvey Video Publications, South Bend, Indiana, 219-234-5670.)



Ordinance of 1787, Congress declared that Indian "land and property shall never be taken from them without their consent." The Treaty of Fort Harmar in 1789 confirmed that the United States now explicitly recognized the principle that the Indians had a right to their land.<sup>12</sup>

However, a succession of broken treaties and acts of Congress abrogating treaties demonstrated ambivalence about how to relate to Indian nations that continues to this day. The fundamental confusion has been over whether Indian tribes are nations, with collective rights and a measure of sovereignty, or simply protected classes of citizens. The most basic conflict was about different understandings of land tenure. Congress finally insisted with the Dawes Severalty Act (1887) that the Indians accept private individual ownership of land. Juhnke called this "a strategy for tribal destruction."<sup>13</sup> Passage of the Dawes Act indicated the sense of

Congress that the Indians were not a nation apart, but, rather, were subjects for whom Congress could legislate. More recently, in "settling" treaty claims in Alaska (1971), Maine (1980), South Dakota (1980), and Massachusetts (1987), Congress and the courts have imposed monetary settlements. In these acts there is both an assertion of jurisdiction and an abrogation of treaty rights.

Third, leaving the Indians out of our stories leads to leaving them out of our lives. If we recognize their story, and our connection with their story, then perhaps we will recognize them when we meet them in our newspapers, on our streets, and in our churches. Our relations with Indians are a present possibility, not just a historical footnote. After we acknowledge that the Potawatomi once lived in Elkhart County, maybe we can acknowledge that they are still alive today, on and off reservations and allotments that stretch from Ontario to Oklahoma. When we open ourselves to the present

President Andrew Jackson, second annual message to Congress, Dec 6, 1830: "It gives me great pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the government steadily pursued for nearly 30 years in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation. Two important tribes have accepted to provisions made for the removal at the last session of Congress and it is believed their example will induce the remaining tribes also to seek the same obvious advantages. Doubtless, it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers. But what do they do more than our ancestors did or their children are now doing."

(Notes from the video *Trail of Death: The Story of the Forced Removal of Potawatomi Indians from Indiana to Kansas in 1838.*)



Joint Native Ministries meet in Goshen, Indiana, March 25-26 1998. United Native Ministries Council (MC), Mennonite Indian Leaders Council (GC), and Native Ministries of Canada (CMC) conferred on Native spirituality, integration, and the next biennial assembly to be held in July 2000. What does it mean for the Mennonite Church when the stories of disinheritance, as well as inheritance, are told? (Credit: John E. Sharp.)



When a government agent demanded that Menominee and his people leave their homelands, the chief refused, saying: "The president [Martin Van Buren had become president in 1837, following Andrew Jackson] does not know that your treaty is a lie, that I never signed it. He does not know that you made my young chiefs drunk and got their consent and pretended to get mine. He does not know that I refuse to sell my lands, and still refuse. He would not by force drive me from my home, the graves of my tribes and my children who have gone to the great spirit, nor allow you to tell me your braves will take me, tied like a dog, if he knew the truth. My brother the president is just, but he listens to the words of the young chiefs who have lied, and when he knows the truth he will leave me to my own. I have not sold my lands; I will not sell them. I have not signed any treaty and will not sign any. I am not going to leave my lands and I don't want to hear anything more about it."

On Aug 30, 1838 General John Tipton arrived with a band of 100 armed volunteers. They surrounded the village (south of present-day Plymouth, Indiana), took Menominee captive, and forced the remaining Potawatomi to "enroll for removal." On September 4, more than 850 Natives were marched at gunpoint toward Kansas. Memonimee was locked in a caged wagon. "What becomes of him, no one knows."

(Notes from the video *Trail of Death: The Story of the Forced Removal of Potawatomi Indians from Indiana to Kansas in 1838*; and from Edmunds, R. David, *The Potawatomis, Keepers of the Fire*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1978, p. 267.)

reality of Indians and learn to know them and their concerns, we may discover shared agenda, new agenda, or conflict.<sup>14</sup>

We need to address the problem of beginning our reports on our settlements without making the connection to the loss of the previous inhabitants. To do this, we may need to become familiar with some different resources or research in some new places.

## Learning to Tell More of the Story

Imagine that the Historical Committee would adopt a policy that all *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* articles touching on the origins of Amish-Mennonite communities must include mention of the tribes displaced, the articles of cession by which they were dispossessed, and where their descendants might be found today. (*Editor's note: Short of making it a policy, the Historical Committee directed the editor to include such data whenever possible.*) Where would you learn this? Would this send you to unfamiliar sources? How would you as a church historian research this part of the story?

### Let me list some of the resources available to you that are useful in this research:

1. Any local title deed abstract will give you some important dates. Here is the first item on the abstract for the farm where I live: "United States of America, to Seymour Moses. . . . By Certificate of Entry, May 21, 1833, No. 2101." The second item continues, "In consideration of full payment under Certificate No. 2101, Give and Grant the Northeast Quarter . . . of lands subject to sale at Fort Wayne, Indiana."
2. Your county historical society may have most of the information you need. The Elkhart County Historical Society has a significant collection, maps and a

five-page paper on *Native American Culture in Elkhart County, Indiana*. Knowledgeable museum staffs are available to guide groups to local Indian sites.<sup>15</sup> At the very least, you should be able to ascertain the names of the tribes that lived in your area.

3. Your local library may have reference books, books in circulation, or specific collections relevant to Indian inhabitants of your area. The Goshen Public Library provided useful materials in all of these categories. From the reference shelves, I was shown a *Handbook of American Indians*<sup>16</sup> that listed 37 treaties with the Potawatomi by date and place of signing. On the shelves I found a book that included a map of 13 major Potawatomi land cessions by date and location,<sup>17</sup> and in the "Indiana" room I found the *Journal of an Emigrating Party of Pottawattomie Indians, 1838*.<sup>18</sup>
4. Kappler's *Indian Treaties*<sup>19</sup> contains the full text of every United States Indian treaty. Every treaty of cession includes a description of the land being ceded. From these descriptions I am able to locate all of Goshen, Indiana, (and my home) in the land ceded by the Treaty of Carey Mission, September 20, 1828.
5. If you are unable to locate Kappler's *Indian Treaties* but you know what treaty you want, the Avalon Project of Yale University will put the text of any treaty on their website. Go to [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm) or search for "Avalon" in the "Education" category. From the home page of the Avalon Project, there is a link to "Major Collections" and then in an alphabetical listing to "Treaties Between the United States and Native Americans." The treaties on-line are listed by date. If the treaty you want is not available, linking to "E-mail comments" from the home page



will let you send your request to [william.fray@yale.edu](mailto:william.fray@yale.edu). In my experience, only two days elapsed until the answer to my request was available on-line.

6. Indiana roadside historical markers are all on a searchable database. This means you can search for any word and find the locations and complete text of all roadside historical markers containing that word. A search for "Potawatomi" turns up seven roadside markers in seven different counties. Go to [www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/ihb.html](http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/ihb.html) or search for "Indiana Historical Marker." I have not found equally useful sites for any other states, although Ohio is working on providing this information.<sup>20</sup>
7. The Bureau of Indian Affairs <http://www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.htm> maintains 11 area offices. Contact the area office for your region, or search their website for addresses of tribal leaders. Here I found addresses and phone numbers for leaders of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi (Dowagiac, Mich.) and of the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa. To do this, you will need to know the official name of a tribe; with 558 federally-recognized tribes, this is not simple. Russell Publications sells United States maps showing federally-recognized and state-recognized tribes with lands. Contact them at <http://www.indiandata.com/>, e-mail [russell@indiandata.com](mailto:russell@indiandata.com), or 9027 North Cobra Drive, Phoenix AZ 85028.
8. Internet search engines are a powerful tool. Searching with a keyword 'Potawatomi' led me to websites for the Citizens Band and Prairie Band (descendants of the Trail of Death) and links led to the 'Potawatomi Web' (<http://www.ukans.edu/~kan/site/pbp/homepage.htm>), a rich site with history, language, cul-

ture, and contact information for eight related bands and first nations in the U.S. and Canada. A message or two later I had some helpful corrections (now incorporated into this article) from a Potawatomi woman in Seattle.

## The Story Continues

There is certainly room for more research and reporting on the relationship of Mennonites and Native Americans. Mennonite interaction with Native Americans has gone through many phases since the days of frontier conflict (e.g., the "Hochstetler massacre" of September 1757) and displacement. Mission schools, hospitals, and churches were established, and MCCers have entered Native communities on a variety of assignments. Some of these stories have been well documented, some have not. At the time of this writing, representation of Native American Mennonites in the leadership structures of the new Mennonite Church is still under discussion.

I have dealt here only with the United States experience. In Canada there is a growing awareness, reflected in increasing use of the term "first nations," and in the recognition that Native land claims represent the rights of a prior nation that suffered an uncompensated loss. The United States, in both official policy and public opinion, is less willing to recognize Native claims. South Dakota Governor William Janklow recently dismissed the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 on the grounds that all of the people who signed the treaty are now dead!<sup>21</sup>

Today there are Mennonites serving with a Christian Peacemaker Team in Pierre, South Dakota. They are monitoring the city, state, and federal government responses to an encampment of Lakota on Sioux treaty land. The CPTers are living with the Lakota

who are protesting an attempted land grab by Governor Janklow and South Dakota Senator Tom Daschle. South Dakota is trying to get 100,000 acres of Sioux treaty land that has been in the control of the United States Army Corps of Engineers for the past 50 years. Daschle has put legislation to transfer the land to South Dakota in two bills to date. The House of Representatives voted to repeal Sen. Daschle's first attempt, but the conference committee did not adopt the repeal language in the final version.<sup>22</sup>

In assigning a team to work with the Lakota, Christian Peacemaker Teams has in effect suggested that Mennonites view the injustice of United States disregard for Indian treaties in the same category as Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes and Mexican government support of paramilitaries in Chiapas.<sup>23</sup> CPT asked supporters to call on Congress to repeal the land grab legislation and raised the issue in a vigil under the Arch of Westward Expansion during the Mennonite General Assembly in St. Louis.<sup>24</sup>

Where do our stories begin? As storytellers, North American church historians must answer this question. Let us see how our stories change, and how our stories change us, when we consider how we have entered the story of the Indians.<sup>25</sup>

—Rich H. Meyer, Goshen, Indiana, is a farmer and mechanic who works half-time for Christian Peacemaker Teams. Since researching the forced removal of the Potawatomi from northern Indiana, he has led educational field trips and given elementary school programs on this subject.

## Notes

1. Tsotsi, W. M., *From Chattel to Wage Slavery*, Lesotho Printing and Publishing Co., Maseru, Lesotho, 1981, p. 15, citing the State Dept. of



Information, *Multi-national Development in South Africa*, the Reality, Pretoria, 1974, p. 22.

2. Wagner, Donald E., *Anxious for Armageddon*, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pa., 1995, p. 92. This phrase is credited to Theodore Herzl and Israel Zangwill. The population of Palestine was about 500,000 (94% Arab) when they introduced this phrase at the First Zionist Congress, 1847.

3. Currie, Roxana, "Log Cabin Captures a Moment in History," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, Vol. LVII, No. 4, October 1996, p. 8.

4. Stoesz, Dennis, "Ora Troyer: Steward of His Community's History," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, Vol. LVII, No. 4, October 1996, p. 1.

5. *World Book*, Vol. 5, World Book, Chicago, 1991, p. 165.

6. It is also true that some *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* articles have included relevant information on relations with Indians. For example, see the article by Greg Hartzler-Miller in the October 1997 *MHB*, Vol. LVIII, No. 4, p. 5.

7. Juhnke, James C., "General Conference Mennonite Missions to the American Indians in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. 54, April 1980, pp. 118-119.

8. These tribes may have been displaced by settlers (including Amish /Mennonite?) more than once. The Sauk and Fox Indians were forced out of Wisconsin by the French in the 18th century, then out of Illinois in the early 19th century by the federal government to make room for white settlers there.

9. Juhnke, p. 132.

10. According to Juhnke, the mission board's objection was not that the missionaries had compromised themselves by taking land which originally belonged to Indians, but that land interests and speculation kept them from devoting their full attention to genuine mission work. In other words, the mission board was more concerned with its own loss than with the Indians' loss. In support, Juhnke cites *The Mennonite*, January 1897, p. 31.

11. Some treaties included specific commitments by the United States to restrain white settlement. From Article 5 of the Treaty of Greenville

(1795): "The United States will protect all the said Indian tribes in the quiet enjoyment of their lands against all citizens of the United States, and against all other white persons who intrude upon the same." Article 6: "If any citizen of the United States, or any other white person or persons, shall presume to settle upon the lands now relinquished by the United States, such citizen or other person shall be out of the protection of the United States; and the Indian tribe, on whose land the settlement shall be made, may drive off the settler, or punish him in such manner as they shall think fit." The Indian land to be so protected in this treaty included from what is now Wayne and Holmes counties in Ohio to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River.

12. Wallace, Anthony F. C., *The Long Bitter Trail*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1993, p. 32.

13. Juhnke, p. 199.

14. Shared agenda: I met and worked alongside Anishinabe trying to close the United States Navy ELF (Extremely Low Frequency) transmitter in Wisconsin. For me, ELF represents our nation's sinful commitment to nuclear first-strike capability. For the Indians, the environmental damage of the ELF antenna situated between their reservations is a crime against the earth. (I imagine there were similar political forces at work in placing the ELF facility between Indian reservations as in locating landfills predominately in minority communities.)

New agenda: An anti-racism team at Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana, is raising questions about the use of "Redskins" as the name of the Goshen High School sports teams.

Conflict: Church leaders in Indiana have led the opposition to plans by tribal groups for gambling facilities. But have there been face-to-face contacts between the church leaders and the tribal leaders?

15. In this regard I acknowledge with gratitude the invaluable service of Cliff Pequet, a volunteer with the Elkhart County Historical Society.

16. Hodge, Frederick Webb, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, *Handbook of American Indians*, Part 2 (North of Mexico), Government

Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1910.

17. Edmunds, R. David, *Potawatomis: Keeper of the Fire*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

18. *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 21, No. 4, Department of History of Indiana University, with the cooperation of the Indiana Historical Society and the Indiana State Library, Bloomington, Ind., December 1925, p. 315.

19. Kappler, Charles J., LL.M., ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II (Treaties), Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1904.

20. Verhoff, Andrew J., Historical Agency Consultant, Local History Office, Ohio Historical Society, e-mail message of September 9, 1999: "As of yet, the texts of Ohio's historical markers are not on OHS's web site, but we have plans to put them up before Ohio's Bicentennial in 2003 (sooner rather than later)."

21. Friesen, Ron, Loveland, Colorado, e-mail report of Wednesday, July 14, 1999, Ron Friesen, CPT: "Governor Janklow has said that since neither he nor anyone living today signed that treaty, that it was null and void." Janklow's quote of March 22, 1999, as reported to CPT by Lakota youth present: "I didn't sign any treaty, you didn't sign any treaty, none of us here signed any treaty."

22. A wealth of information on current and recent legislation is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

23. In both of these international contexts in which CPT is working, United States support is seen as an important factor in the persistence of the injustice being addressed.

24. July 24, 1999.

25. I have used varied vocabulary—Indians, Native Americans, members of first nations—because I have heard the people I am identifying ask for all of these in different contexts. It is my assumption that preferred terminology will vary from place to place and over time, as it has in the past. I attempt to allow individuals and groups to name themselves, and if the labels I have used offend, I apologize.



# New Treasures in the Archives of the Mennonite Church

by Dennis Stoesz, Archivist

What follows is a sampling of personal papers and organizational records that have come into the Archives during the past six months. They are listed alphabetically by the name of the collection.

**Brandt, Christian**, 1782-1866, Wayne County, Ohio. Copybook, January 8, 1852, 198 pages, handwritten, 6 ½ by 7 ¾ inches. Brandt served as minister in the Wayne County (Oak Grove) Amish church from about 1818 to the early 1860s. It was common for 19th-century Amish ministers to make copybooks of important documents.

Over eighty percent of the materials copied by Brandt in 1852 are prose and poetry written by George Jutzi. Jutzi served as minister in the Canton Amish church in an adjoining county near Richville, Ohio. Although Jutzi died in 1845, Brandt obtained Jutzi's manuscript and made at least two different copies from it. The other copy, undated and slightly different in content from this one, is available at the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College. The Jutzi manuscript was published in 1853 in Stark County, Ohio, as a book, *Ermahnungen von George Jutzi*.

Four noteworthy items are included toward the end of the copybook: an August 28, 1751, sermon on Ephesians 2:10, *The New Creature* by Deknatel, a Mennonite minister in Amsterdam (pages 163-

189); a hymn of 10 verses, *Mit Gott in einer jeden Sache*, 1852, sung to the melody of Psalm 100 (page 190-[191]); a poem, *Views of the Poet, Versified* (page [193]); and another hymn, *O Mensch, wie ist dein Herz bestellt* (page [194]).

Credit for information and documentation on this copybook goes to Paton Yoder and Leonard Gross, both of Goshen, Indiana. 1 File. Donor: Margaret Baker, Orrville, Ohio.

**Emma Mennonite Church**, 1901- , Topeka, LaGrange County, Indiana. Church records, 1967-1989, including church council minutes, 1967-1989; church bulletins, 1984-1989; and the church newsletter, *Overview*, 1987-1989. 3 linear inches. Donor: Al Yoder, Shipshewana, Indiana.

**Goshen College, Women's Studies**, 1983- , Goshen, Indiana. Records, 1975-

1998, including course outlines, class lists, correspondence, reports, and budgets of the program. Faculty involved have included Judith Davis, 1975-1982; Ruth Krall, 1979-1981; Anna Bowman, 1980-1998; and Robert Birky, 1988-1989. Materials also include research and interviews into the history of the program by Goshen College student Janneken Smucker, 1997, and records from the Goshen College Student Women's Association, 1981-1997. 20 linear inches. Donor: Anna Bowman, Goshen, Indiana.



Administrative staff at opening of the soil conservation CPS Camp 22, Henry, Illinois, in December 1941. (L-R): H. Ralph Hernley, educational director; Elizabeth Hernley, dietitian; Leland A. Bachman, director; Elsie Bachman, matron; and Cornelius P. Lohrenz, business manager. H. Ralph and Elizabeth Hernley, who served at this camp, recently donated film footage of this camp to the Archives. (Source: Mennonite Central Committee Photograph Collection.)





*CPS men helping clean up after the tornado at Lacon, Illinois, March 1942. These men came from the nearby soil conservation CPS Camp 22 at Henry, Illinois. (L-R): Floyd F. Yoder, Kalona, Iowa; Orville C. Smith, Sumner, Iowa; ????. (Source: Mennonite Central Committee Photograph Collection.)*

**Hernley, Elizabeth (Sieber) and H. Ralph**, Goshen, Indiana. Eight 8mm films, 1941-1946, and one VHS video, 1992, of the Hernleys' involvement in Civilian Public Service at four different camps: Camp 22, Henry, Illinois; Camp 40, Howard, Pennsylvania; Camp 20, Sideling Hill, Pennsylvania; and Camp 138, Unit No. 2, Malcolm, Nebraska. Just over two hours in length, it includes mostly black and white footage. Images include such things as life at the camp; Colonel Lewis Kosch inspecting camp; work with soil conservation; disaster relief from the tornado at Lacon, Illinois; and visits to local churches. Elizabeth served as a traveling dietitian out of which grew the CPS Cooking Schools. Ralph served in various roles as education director, assistant director and director at the camps. 4 linear inches. Donor: Elizabeth and H. Ralph Hernley.

**Koch, Roy S.**, Goshen, Indiana. Records, 1982-1991, including minutes, correspondence, and newsletters from the time when Koch served as executive secretary of

Mennonite Renewal Services for five years. Also included are materials of his service as overseer of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1986-1988. A fuller story on 50 years of ministry of Roy S. and Martha (Horst) Koch, 1936-1986, is found in the book, *I Will Build My Church: A History of St.*

*Jacobs Mennonite Church* (Ontario, Canada), 1986. Koch served this church as minister from 1936-1957. Other books by Koch include *Zestful Living for Older Adults*, *My Personal Pentecost* (Martha included), and *Ten Steps to Your Personal Pentecost*. 10 linear inches. Donor: Roy Koch.

**Mennonite Association of Retired Persons**, 1989- , Elkhart, Indiana.

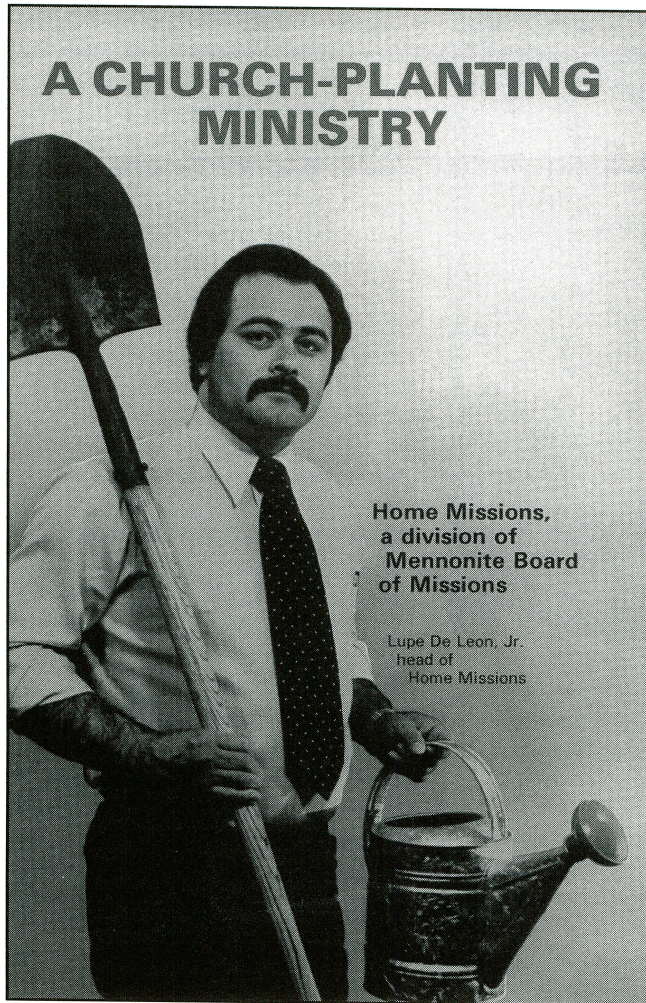
Correspondence of executive director Barbara K. Reber and assistant director Don D. Reber, 1989-1998. The association provides its 2,000 members with opportunities for mutual sharing, support, and Christian service opportunities. Also included are minutes, correspondence, reports, and newsletters of the earlier organization, Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging, 1981-1987. Also included is Reber's correspondence when she served as executive secretary of the Women's Missionary and Service Commission, 1979-1985. 2.5 linear feet. Donor: Barbara K. and Don D. Reber, Goshen, Indiana.

**Mennonite Board of Education**, 1905- , Elkhart, Indiana. Official records, 1986-1989, from the central office files, which reflect the work of



*CPS men weeding the 13,000,000 seedlings being raised in the nursery at CPS Camp 40 at Howard, Pennsylvania, 1942-1943. This nursery was administered under the Soil Conservation Service. (Source: Mennonite Central Committee Photograph Collection.)*





*Director Lupe De Leon Jr. in 1978, portraying a renewed thrust by the Home Missions Department to plant new churches in urban areas. The 1970-1980 records of this department were recently deposited into the Archives.*

*(Source: Mennonite Board of Missions Collection.)*

the Board and staff over this four-year time period. Three of the 10 staff members included Albert J. Meyer, executive secretary, and Loren E. Swartzendruber and Orville L. Yoder as associate executive secretaries. Also included are Youth Census Records, 1995-1998. 11.25 linear feet. Donor: Sandi Bromley and Ruth Schrock, administrative assistants.

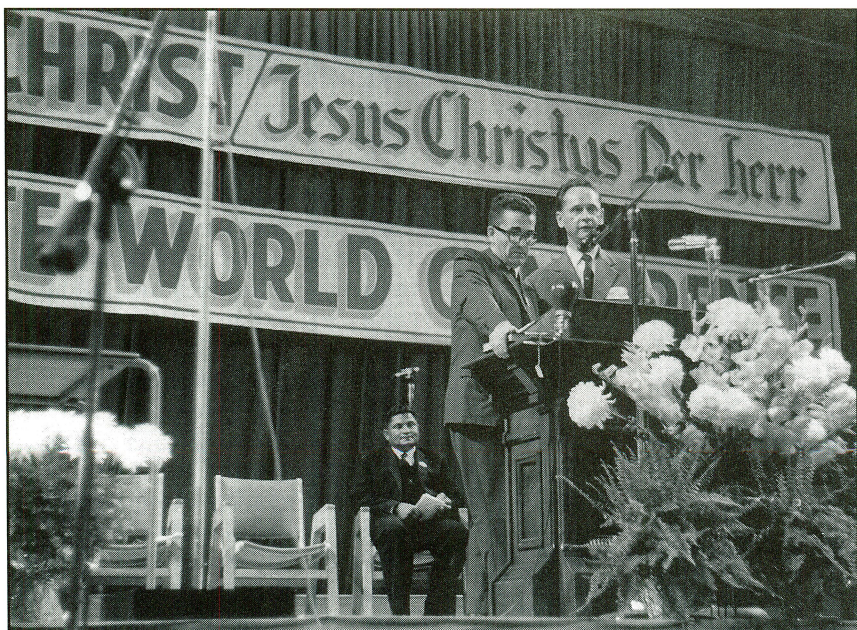
**Mennonite Board of Missions,** 1882- , Home Missions, Elkhart, Indiana. Records, 1970-1980, reflecting the program of this Home Missions Department during this 10-year period. Directors were Nelson E. Kauffman ( -1971), Simon Gingerich (1971-1977), and Lupe De Leon (1977- ). 3.75 linear feet. Donor: Ethel Hoffman, coordinator of office services.

**Mennonite World Conference,** 1925- . Four reel-to-reel tape recordings of several sessions at the Seventh Mennonite World Conference held at Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, 1962. Persons recorded include Harold S. Bender, Carl F. Brusewitz, Peter J. Dyck, Nelson Litwiller, Hendrik W.

*Sunday meeting at the 1962 Mennonite World Conference held at the Memorial Auditorium in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. The theme was "The Lordship of Christ." Several tape recordings of this conference were recently deposited into the Archives. (Source: Mennonite Central Committee Photograph Collection.)*







*Paul Peachey interprets for a French delegate at the 1962 Mennonite World Conference held at the Memorial Auditorium in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. The theme was "The Lordship of Christ." Several tape recordings of this conference were recently deposited into the Archives. (Source: Mennonite Central Committee Photograph Collection.)*

Meihuizen, A. J. Metzler, and Erland Waltner. The recording was done by Alfred Dietzel, Pigeon, Michigan, who then made copies available for purchase to the delegate body. 3 linear inches. Donor: C. J. Dyck, former secretary of Mennonite World Conference, Elkhart, Indiana.

**Oyer, Esther R.** (-1998). *School-Girl Days Book*, 1919-1931, used by Esther Oyer, while she attended Metamora High School (Illinois), 1919-1921; Hesston College and Bible School (Kansas), 1921-1922; Clinton County Normal School (Michigan), 1922-1923; and Goshen College (Indiana), 1929-1931. Included are autographs, photographs, poems, diary entries, programs, and notes of her involvement at the different schools. Esther Oyer married Cyril Smith from Michigan. 1 File. Donor: Lois L. Yoder, Goshen, Indiana.

**Powell, John**, Elkhart, Indiana. Papers, 1969-1978, on Powell's involvement in the African Afro-

American Inter-Mennonite Unity Conferences (AFRAM) held from 1973 to 1978. Included are minutes, correspondence, reports, budgets, news releases, programs and speeches from the conferences, lists of delegates, and some photographs. The first meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1973. The

purpose of the organization was to bridge gaps between black groups in the Mennonite Church. Papers also include a file on Powell's involvement in Minority Ministries Council, 1969-1972; a Soul and Spirit Retreat, 1970; and the Cross-Cultural Convention, 1972. 1 linear foot. Donor: John Powell.

**Smucker, Ralph R.**, 1894-1975. Three 16mm films taken by Smucker of the Mennonite Church in India and Africa, as part of Smucker's Missionary Film Service, Elkhart, Indiana, 1947-1950, 1961-1962. Film titles include *Christ's Continuing Church in India*; *God's Messengers in Foreign Lands—India Missions, Part II*; and *Who Will Go for Me? (African Missions)*. Films are 900, 700, and 900 feet in length, respectively. Images include churches, schools, ceremonies, gatherings, social life, ministers, and missionaries in India and Africa. Art Smucker has completed a log of the images on each film. 1.25 linear feet. Donor: Arthur A. Smucker, Goshen, Indiana. *D*

—Dennis Stoesz serves as archivist for the Archives of the Mennonite Church.



*AFRAM meeting at Mennonite World Conference, Wichita, Kansas, July 1978. The purpose of these African Afro-American Inter-Mennonite Unity Conferences was to bridge gaps between black people in the Mennonite Church. (Source: John Powell Collection.)*



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# Marking Time

by Wally Kroeker

Of all the goods produced by Mennonite businesses in Russia, only the clock endures as an economic artifact of its era.

WINNIPEG, Man. — They started coming in 1874, from the steppes of Russia to the central plains of the United States and Canada. By the time the tide of immigration subsided in the 1920s, some 40,000 Mennonites had crossed the Atlantic.

Hundreds lugged a particularly precious cargo—a wall clock with bulky pendulum and heavy brass weights. Many were secured in wooden hope chests or wicker baskets. Some were swaddled in blankets on laps, never out of sight as they moved from Russian wagons to seagoing vessels, pitching and yawing across the stormy Atlantic, to riverboats and trains that would slice through the frontier to sod-buster homesteads on the plains of Kansas or Manitoba.

Of all the output generated by Mennonite business activity in Russia, the clock stands out as an economic artifact, marking much more than the strides of time.

Who were the craftsmen who put a clock in every home? There were names like Lepp, Hamm, Mandtler, and Hildebrand. But the one that started it all and endured the

longest was Kroeger. Mention that name to Mennonite history buffs and eyes light up. "Ahh, the clockmaker."

Today, decades after the Kroeger company closed its doors, Russian Mennonite clocks are prized as heirlooms and sought after by collectors.

Locate one in a Mennonite museum and you'll be struck by its primitive simplicity—a large metal wall clock with a long brass pendulum and driven by brass weights on a string. No frills, no fancy cabinet or glass case. Just a well-crafted clock for simple Mennonite farmsteads of the 18th and 19th centuries. Plenty good for folk who measured life in seasons rather than hours.

From his home in a tree-lined Winnipeg neighborhood, Arthur Kroeger holds forth about horology, clock repair, Mennonite identity, and a family business of generations past. Spry, lucid, and good-humored, he is well into retirement. He is the grandson of the last Kroeger clockmaker in Russia and the last one with a passion for clocks. His hobby these days is writing it all down for future generations.

In 1803 Kroeger's ancestor, the master clockmaker Johann Krueger, emigrated from Prussia to the

Chortitza Colony in Russia where he changed his name to Kroeger, perhaps to differentiate himself from other branches of the clan. The Mennonites had begun settling in that area of Russia in 1789. By the time he arrived, the region was well established, with sufficient economic rigor to support a clock business.

Along with his skill, Kroeger brought his tools and raw material to resume his trade. He would in time face competition from other Mennonite clockmakers. But he and his descendants would dominate.

"Clockmaking was a good business at that time," says Arthur Kroeger. "The surrounding farm communities prospered. Other Mennonite colonies had been established, and the Kroegers supplied them all with clocks."

The clocks had a reputation for being well made and inexpensive. But that doesn't mean they were cheap, says Kroeger.

He digs out a Russian advertisement from 1905. A basic model is listed at 15 rubles.

"Remember," he cautions, "that the average worker earned only a ruble a day, so a clock cost two-weeks salary."

As people became more affluent, they'd trade in their one-handed clock for a new model with two hands and a bell train that clanged on the hour. These could cost up to 50 rubles.

Eventually the market became saturated, and modernity set in. By the 1900s business began to dwindle. Other clockmakers re-invented





themselves, using their mechanical skills to produce threshing machines, horse rakes, and reapers.

David Kroeger, Arthur Kroeger's grandfather, kept producing clocks, though he would eventually give it up and turn to making two-cycle engines for agriculture. Another relative, also named Johann Kroeger, repaired clocks until 1938, but no new clocks were made after 1930. "Nearly 200 years of clockmaking by the Krueger/Kroeger family in Poland, Prussia, and the Ukraine came to an end," says Kroeger.

Arthur Kroeger, himself a native of Russia, immigrated to Canada via Germany in 1949. A teacher initially, he got work in a metal shop when he came to Winnipeg and later moved into drafting and engineering. He spent 37 years working as a technician, first for iron companies and then for Manitoba Hydro.

In Canada he met the Mennonite industrialist J. J. Klassen who had worked for Kroeger's grandfather in Russia.

"He knew there were quite a few Kroeger clocks in Canada and told me I should get involved with clocks, because people would be coming to me for repairs and restoration. He was right."

One day when a relative brought

him a clock, Kroeger took it apart and cleaned it, and that became his first restoration job.

While he claims to have no entrepreneurial instincts ("too insecure"), he did have a knack for the mechanical side.

"I gradually got into it. I started to subscribe to the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors Bulletin. They had a lot of articles and pointers about how to fix clocks. I bought books and got myself some machinery, including a metal lathe."

He also began restoring the decorative faceplates, the only concession to flair on the Russian Mennonite clocks. Some of the first models were adorned with biblical scenes, or colorful tulips depicting Anabaptism's Dutch background. Later the Kroegers would use roses to represent their village of Rosenthal—the valley of roses.

Part of the simplicity of the clocks was that their faceplates were exposed, not encased in wood and glass. "That made them vulnerable to getting dirty, especially on the farms," says Kroeger.

In many immigrant homes, well-meaning homemakers would diligently clean their clocks with soap and detergent, not the greatest thing

for the paint, which was homemade to begin with. "And being over a hundred years old, the paint would crack off, especially here on the prairies where we have a very dry climate," he says.

Restorations have kept Kroeger busy. Over the years he has done about 80 of them. "I've got clocks around the clock," he says.

For Kroeger, clocks are not only a rewarding hobby but also a treasured link with his past. As with many Russian Mennonites, it is a past filled with tragedy. The Kroeger family suffered greatly under the Bolsheviks. Kroeger's grandfather David, the last Kroeger to make a living at clocks, was beaten to death by anarchists.

Kroeger's father worked with clocks but didn't make a profession of it. He learned the trade as a child. When the Kroeger children came home from school, they'd work in the shop for an hour or two, making clock parts before they could go out and play. "It was kind of a compulsory apprenticeship," Kroeger says.

In 1990 a clock came into Kroeger's Winnipeg shop for repair. When he examined the mechanism he made a startling discovery. Inside were scratched the initials of his father, who would have been 16 when he worked on this particular clock. He died in a Soviet concentration camp in 1942.

What helped spell the end of the Kroeger clock dynasty was the product's simple sturdiness.

"They made their clocks too good," says Kroeger of his forebears. "The market became saturated, and there was no obsolescence."

The new Soviet era, meanwhile, had no room for private enterprise, and electrification didn't help. "The electric clock finished off the mechanical clock business," says Kroeger.

The Kroegers might have prolonged the life of their company by adapting to the times and diversifying into different models with fancy cases. But they were Mennonites who still valued simplicity.



"They had a fear of becoming too worldly," he says.

Kroeger's research suggests that Mennonite clockmakers in Russia manufactured some 10,000 to 12,000 clocks in a hundred-year period. About 80 percent of them were made by Kroegers.

How many still exist? Kroeger estimates there are still a couple of hundred clocks in homes in Canada, United States, and Central and South America. More may still exist in parts of the former Soviet Union.

Ask him what they're worth today and he smiles mischievously. He doesn't like to speculate. Collectors don't want him to disrupt the market. Besides, much of a clock's value is in the eye of the beholder.

"Let's just say some of them in top condition have fetched a good price," he says.

With the possible exception of

the family hope chest, the clock was the leading "Mennonite export" from Russia. For Mennonite immigrants enduring poverty and hardship in their new land, the clock gave a sense of connectedness with their past. It reminded them of a time when they were still prosperous.

Kroeger tells the story of an elderly woman in Germany. When still in Russia, her family had been forced to move a lot, but they were always able to take their clock with them. Then the clock had fallen silent and needed repair. Now the woman was old and blind and hoped someone would come to fix her clock. Before she died, she wanted to hear it one more time. Not many businesses today can boast a product with such mystique.

"You look at it every day, you have to wind it every day, it becomes part of the family," says

Kroeger.

"When the father would ceremoniously get up to wind the clock, it was a sure sign for visitors to leave. The routine of winding the clock at the same time every day created a bond with a machine that was always in motion."

For new immigrants on the plains, the reassuring tick-tock was like a mechanical heartbeat. "I am at home," it seemed to say.

The old pendulum clock on Kroeger's wall reaches the top of the hour and interrupts him with a sharp, metallic bong. Kroeger pauses to listen as the sequence plays out. His grandfather would have heard the same bong, from the same clock, when he made it a hundred years ago.

"It's a good sound," says Kroeger, as he gazes wistfully into the distance, pondering the incremental passage of time. *D*

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## Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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# MIENNONITE

## Historical Bulletin

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## Plain People and the Refinement of America



*John Adams (1735-1826), the second president of the United States, thought painting one's barn was frivolous, a waste of money, and a poor example to neighbors. The Nebraska Amish of central Pennsylvania agree with Adams on this point.*

*Photo by John E. Sharp*

by Steve Nolt

Two Old German Baptist Brethren couples from near Delphi in Carroll County, Indiana, were visiting in Daviess County. They were in town, poking around in stores much as any other tourist or visitor would do, when an "English" man approached them. "Are you Amish?" he asked. "No," they replied politely. "We're Brethren." Before they could explain more, the man furrowed his brow, turned,

and walked away toward his wife who had waited at a distance. In a voice easily heard by those around and tinged with annoyance, the man announced, "They say they're not Amish—but they are!"

Let us admit that the inquiring tourist had good reason to be confused. There are a host of different "Plain groups" today—and more being formed all the time. A conservative Mennonite reader joked to author Steve Scott that Scott's 1996 book, *An Introduction to Old Order and Conservative Mennonite Groups*<sup>1</sup>, should have been published as a

loose-leaf binder so that pages could be added and taken out with the same rapidity and regularity that its contents change.

"The Plain People" is in many ways a loose label, and one that is often batted about without much specificity or care. What do we mean by "plainness"? I think there is a very general sense among latter-day Anabaptists of what this means, but what is the larger historical and religious context out of which people came to be called "plain"? We might also ask, who are we talking about when we use the term





*The Nebraska Amish of Mifflin, Centre, and Snyder counties of central Pennsylvania are one of the most traditional of all plain groups.*  
Photo by John E. Sharp

"plain"? How might we make sense of the various groups that such a heading assumes, and how can we think about their relationships with one another? I will suggest some ways to begin thinking about these questions.

## How do we understand "plainness"?

There are a variety of Anabaptist groups that are termed "plain."

Numerous books include the term "plain people" in their titles without explanation. An Amish-affiliated commercial paper published in Pennsylvania is called *Plain Communities Business Exchange*. A Beachy Amish congregation in Newport, Maine, calls itself Plain Christian Fellowship. An Indiana Old Order Mennonite in conversation refers to "other plain people" without being very specific about whom he has in mind. Perhaps there is a belief that we know "plain" when we see it—at least in terms of dress, and many people assume that dress suggests other things about its wearer's lifestyle.

But what is the historical context out of which we have come to call some people "plain"? Some of the roots are obviously biblical or stem from aspects of European Anabaptist tradition. There are passages in the New Testament—from Jesus, Paul, Peter, and James—to avoid costly ornament in favor of a spirit of contentment. Certain streams of sixteenth-century Anabaptism, from both the Swiss and the Dutch, picked up on the idea of self-denial in ways that promoted simplicity of life. For example, the 1591 "Concept of Cologne" condemned "the fashions of dress [that] resemble more the ways of the world than they do the way of Christian humility." Without establishing exact guidelines, the document enjoined "everyone to be content with . . . simple clothing."<sup>2</sup>

Without diminishing these bibli-

cal and specifically Anabaptist roots and impulses, we must acknowledge that the situation here in America was, at least at first, more complex. Non-ostentation was a broadly shared value in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Plainness was actually something of a virtue among political republicans in the American colonies and the young United States.

Despite their establishment of race-based, hereditary slavery, colonial European Americans held a remarkably common bias against aristocracy and old-style social class distinctions. In a literal sense the aristocracy did not replicate itself in America. On the eve of the Revolution there was only one titled person among the permanent residents of the colonies—Virginia's Lord Fairfax. The Revolution itself gave new impetus to the idea of simplicity and the glorification of common things. American republicans showed their patriotism by rejecting the showiness and superfluous waste of Old World princes and nobles. A practical, frontier-style impulse animated their desire to strip away excess, as well as an ideological desire to show that America could do more with less.

John Adams (1735-1826), for example, as a leader in the Continental Congress, first vice president, and second president of the United States, thought it frivolous to paint one's barn. It was a waste of money, not to mention a poor example to his neighbors. As a

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leader Adams needed to model restraint and simplicity, and so cautioned his wife Abigail (1744-1818), who managed the home and farm business, against paint and "all expensive ornaments" on farm buildings.<sup>3</sup>

In early American society there were, of course, people of "the better sort." But they were clergy or people with more education or status derived from well-regarded ancestry, not people who had more money or more things, or who lived on a scale much different from their neighbors. Indeed, having an assortment of worldly accoutrements or frittering away one's time with dances and card-playing was often a sure sign that one was not among "the better sort."

In many popular religious settings, as well, simplicity was a mark of godliness. Adherents of the rapidly rising Methodist movement looked to their founder John Wesley (1703-1791), who strenuously counseled plainness in all aspects of life. Protestant evangelicals from Methodists to Baptists to United Brethren all condemned ostentation, and many detailed in their discipline books how to stay within acceptable limits. In 1818 the Evangelical Association, for example, "resolved that none of our ministers be allowed to wear gloves during the Summer, nor to use silver-plated bridle bits or stirrups, or loaded whips, and in no case to adorn their person with large watch keys."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to this general cultural tendency, most late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Mennonites, Amish, and Brethren also lived in a more immediate environment that further reinforced support for simplicity. Pennsylvania Germans of all stripes—of whom Anabaptist groups were one small piece—stood apart notably in their customs and seemingly old-fashioned dress. In 1797 the Polish nobleman Julian Niemcewicz (1758-1841) arrived in Frederick, Maryland, and observed that while

even the oldest German inhabitant he met "was born in America, nevertheless by dress and way of life it is easy to recognize them as Germans and even to place them as Germans of the 16th century." Instead of British-style bonnets, women wore "large white hats without crowns like huge flat plates" while men sported "long, wide linen trousers."<sup>5</sup>

Pennsylvania German custom stressed simplicity and reflected the lingering memory of traditional German laws guarding against lavish clothing.<sup>6</sup> Piety and plain dress were associated with the memory of saintly Pennsylvania Germans of all religious persuasions. One North German immigrant Lutheran pastor, John Uhlhorn (1794-1834), who arrived in the New World wearing earrings, quickly learned that such stylishness permitted in Hamburg would never be countenanced by Germans in Maryland.<sup>7</sup> Simple clothing and humble demeanor was how people described the likes of Lutheran pastor John William Heim (1782-1849).<sup>8</sup> Then, too, many Pennsylvania Germans were skeptical of higher education and church institutions, seeing them as examples of excess and pride. In such an environment, simplicity in church and home and personal life was a variation on an American theme.

Between 1790 and 1850, however, there was a remarkable cultural shift in the United States which affected not only how people lived, but how they thought about how they lived. Americans began to aspire to live in a style that they often called "refined." In his book, *The Refinement of America*, historian Richard Bushman recounts how by about 1850 "gentility" had triumphed in America.<sup>9</sup> Being "respectable" came to mean something other than plain and simple.

In an ironic way, the fact that white America was relatively free from social class and rank distinctions meant that suddenly the possibility was open for anyone to be an aristocrat. In a society that prized

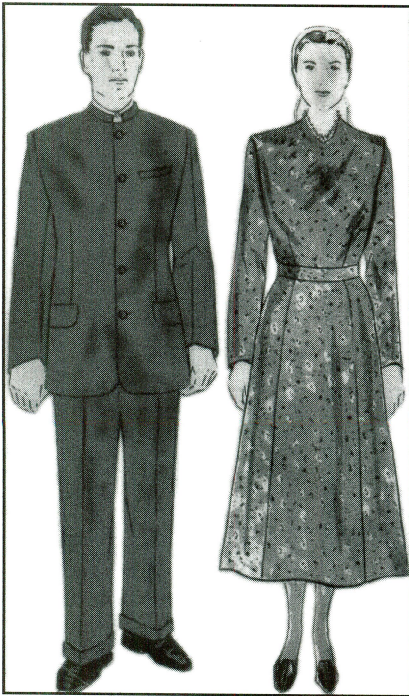


*The 1885 wedding picture of Jacob and \_\_\_\_\_ Moser, Wayne County, Ohio, shows a modest difference in the definition of plainness. Gingerich, Mennonite Attire Through Four Centuries, 1970, p. 147.*

both equality and liberty, the race was on to the top of the social ladder, now open to all comers. Unlike John Adams and others who saw America as a place where freedom demanded restraint, increasing numbers of people saw freedom as the means to fulfill aspirations of gentility unhindered.

Exacting guidebooks appeared (based on Renaissance-era Italian nobility manuals) which instructed one on how to talk, walk, eat, laugh, and write a letter like a gentleman or a lady—instruction on everything but how to work, which was not a genteel thing to do. Of course genteel activities demanded genteel surroundings, such as houses with carpets, mirrors, and display objects such as dishes which one did not use but had only "for show." Ordinary people worked long and hard to give the appearance of not working at all. Refined people read novels, had more clothes than they could wear, and found creative





*Plain but refined. The refinement of America is seen here in what Melvin Gingerich identifies as "Mennonite 'plain clothing,' or the 'regulation garb'" in Mennonite Attire Through Four Centuries, 1970, p. 152.*

ways to demonstrate that they possessed excess wealth.

The social experiment in refinement was in many ways a success. Refinement actually suppressed class. Vaudeville showmen began to refer to everyone in the audience as "Ladies and gentlemen. . . ." Anyone, it turned out, could be a lady or a gentleman—terms which a century before had been reserved for a select few.

It is hardly surprising, then, that we find Amishman David Beiler's complaints about finery during this era. In 1862 Beiler (1786-1871) was writing in the wake of refinement's triumph, and his complaints about fine shoes, new household gadgets, and the like spoke to its success.<sup>10</sup> The world in which Beiler had been born had changed in the course of several decades, and left his interest in simple things suddenly on the defensive. It is also no surprise that the tensions which would eventual-

ly produce Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren Old Order movements emerged in the years following 1860.

It is here, in the aftermath of the refinement of America that we discover the emergence of "plainness." Even though simplicity was an old element in the collective Mennonite, Brethren, and Amish resistance to "the world," it emerged in a new way in the shadow of popular refinement. The whole idea of non-ostentation now seemed out-of-date and even out-of-place in America. Neighboring Pennsylvania Germans were slow to pick up on the message of refinement and gentility, but they, too, by the end of the nineteenth century had acquired at least a domesticated form of it.

If this were simply the story of economic wealth and opportunity gone to seed, it would be interesting enough, but the changes that refined gentility brought were much deeper, affecting even how people thought about religion—thinking which in turn cemented the triumph of refinement.

At one time Protestant evangelicals had been some of the strongest supporters of simplicity. They had also long insisted that conversion and the new birth resulted in new Christians tossing off the frivolities of the world as they devoted themselves to Christ. For example, converts might be expected to discard fancy jewelry, fine hats, or attendance at dances as a mark of their conversion. Not coincidentally, the things they abandoned were exactly the sorts of things associated with gentility, and many evangelicals disciplined or excommunicated members who slid back into such habits, often condemning gentility as an unscriptural class distinction.

But now everyone was a lady or a gentleman through a process that promised uplift and betterment, not a new class war. Clergy preached gentility as the opposite of rudeness and vulgarity; refinement was almost shorthand for the fruits of the Spirit. By mid-century, popular

theology had subtly redefined conversion as a movement from coarse thoughts and behavior to proper and mannerly behavior. Instead of purging people of their genteel trapping, conversion eliminated roughness and elevated people's spirits so that they could appreciate practical progress, betterment, and good taste.<sup>11</sup> The way mainstream Americans talked and thought about religion and conversion was forever changed, and those in Anabaptist circles who picked up these cues could hardly help but absorb some of its effect.<sup>12</sup>

The story of plainness is, of course, more complicated than the attention given it here. The refinement of America was also linked to capitalism and the production of consumer goods by people working so hard to buy them and demonstrate their gentility that they never had time to use or enjoy them.

But whatever we think about the sort of paradoxical class system that America has created in which refinement and improving yourself relative to others promises equality, the makers of refined America and its consumer culture were right about at least one thing: we change ourselves by changing our environment. The genteel-to-be believed that wall mirrors and carpets and novels and imported broad-clothes would make them into people their grandparents had been fundamentally unable to become. They were correct.

And at some level David Beiler knew that, too. He chose his habits by choosing a surrounding community that practiced them. If plainness continues to have meaning—even among those who have adopted elements of American evangelical conversion theology—it rests upon a commitment to being a church community together. Refinement is really a value and goal of those who are searching for a community in a fluid and undefined world.

Refinement and plainness have other dimensions, too. Our use of



Beachy Amish Mennonite	8 congregations
Bethel Conservative Mennonite Fellowship	1 congregation
Brethren in Christ	3 congregations
Central District (General Conf. Mennonite Church)	6 congregations
Church of the Brethren	28 congregations
Conservative Mennonite Conference	8 congregations
Dually affiliated GCMC/MC	3 congregations
Dually affiliated MC/COB	1 congregation
Dunkard Brethren	1 congregation
Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (MC)	42 congregations
Mennonite Biblical Alliance	1 congregation
Mid-West Mennonite Fellowship	4 congregations
Nationwide Fellowship Churches (Mennonite)	1 congregation
Ohio-Indiana Mennonite Conf. ("Wisler" Mennonites)	2 congregations
Old Brethren	1 congregation
Old German Baptist Brethren	1 congregation
Old Order Amish (Elkhart-LaGrange)	approx. 103 districts
Old Order Amish (Nappanee)	35 districts
Old Order Mennonite—Groffdale Conference	3 meetinghouses
Old Order Mennonite (Weaver group)	1 congregation
unaffiliated conservative Mennonites	3 congregations

(These groups are drawn from the following addresses: Benton, Bremen, Bristol, Burr Oak, Cassopolis, Centerville, Colon, Constantine, Dowagiac, Elkhart, Foraker, Goshen, LaGrange, Middlebury, Milford, Millersburg, Nappanee, New Paris, North Liberty, Nottawa, Osceola, Shippshewana, South Bend, Sturgis, Syracuse, Three Rivers, Topeka, Wakarusa, and White Pigeon.)

time and priorities suggest the depth of simplicity in anyone's life. These are questions that even the historic "plain people" face as they move into new types of jobs and other settings, which consume significant amounts of their weeks. For modern mainline Anabaptists the value of individual self-determination limits the degree to which we can have a strong group identity to counter the lures of consumerism and individual achievement, which promise to tell us who we are in ways that mock simplicity.

## Who are the "Plain People"?

But if the story and definition of simplicity is far from simple, making sense of the groups which lay claim to its title can be equally complicated. There is tremendous variety even within the Northern Indiana-Southern Michigan region popularly called "Michiana." Using the *Mennonite Yearbook*, *Mennonite Church Information*, *Mennonite Directory*, *Brethren Encyclopedia*, and

Amish directories to generate a list of these groups yields more than 200 congregations in 1999.<sup>13</sup> (See chart above)

Each of these groups has its own history and within each group there are very different stories. For example, current members of the Beachy Amish Fellowship, such as Woodlawn and Fair Haven, emerged for different reasons and affiliated with the Beachy movement at different times. Similarly, congregations of the General Conference Mennonite Central District include those which were once Central Conference Mennonites (e.g., Silverwood and Eighth Street), a congregation that was always General Conference (Hively Avenue), and one which was Old Mennonite and then General Conference, but never Central Conference (First/ West Market Street, Nappanee).

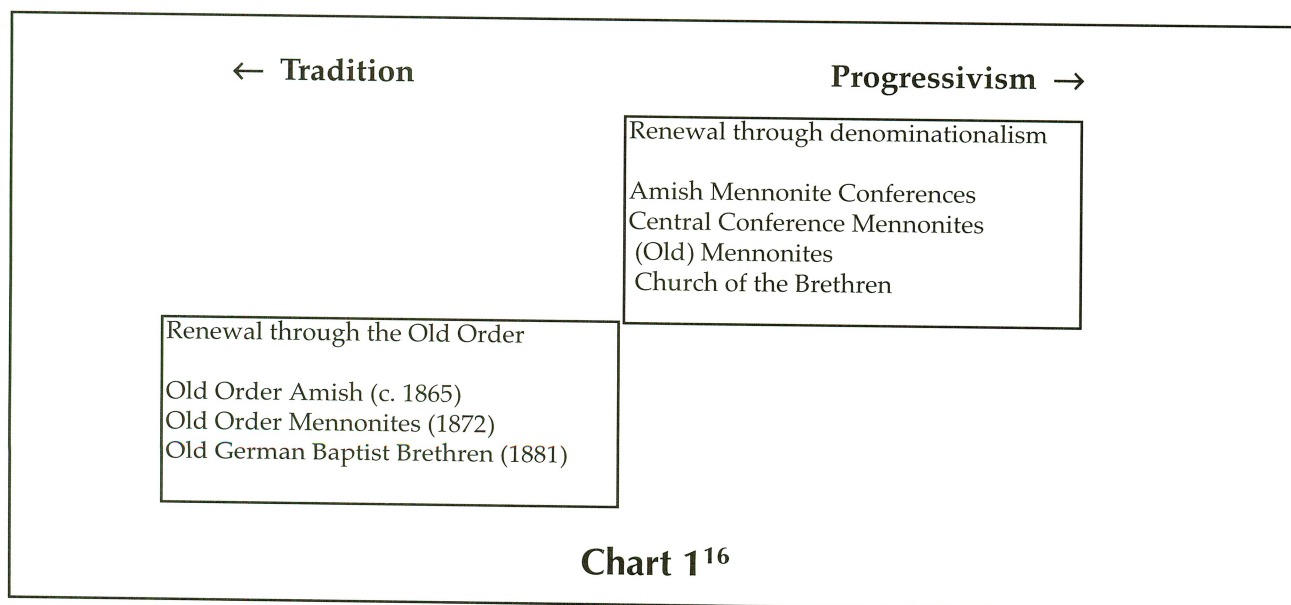
Some readers might want to add to this list denominations which have historic ties to these groups, such as the Missionary Church or the Brethren Church (Ashland).

While one could go through this

list and discuss the unique story of each, that might only add to the confusion that many feel when faced with such an enumeration.<sup>14</sup> Instead, I would like to suggest one way of thinking about these groups and their relationships to one another. This is admittedly my own mental picture, but I have found it a helpful way of making sense of the diversity and organizing my thinking.

First, we should note that the most common way observers think about these groups is to line them up on a continuum using some sort of conservative-to-progressive gradation. There is some reason for thinking this way—Old Order folks, for example, often talk about "higher" or "lower" groups, suggesting a sort of linear arrangement. People who have switched churches tend to talk about moving from a more conservative to a more liberal group, or vice versa. Even the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, uses this basic approach in a spectrum chart to describe Conservative Amish and Mennonite groups of Swiss origin. This is still essentially





a linear way of organizing them.<sup>15</sup>

I find such continua a confusing way of thinking about the "Plain churches." Such models contain an assumed understanding of what is traditional and what is progressive. When I try to make those assumptions more explicit, I find that they contain elements of different sorts. Some have to do with how one thinks about church, and others have to do with uses of technology or the nature of interaction with larger society. These things are related in some cases, but they are, in the end, different.

In thinking about Anabaptist groups, I begin by looking at the major rupture in church life in the second half of the nineteenth century and the emergence of Old Order churches. While many Mennonites, Amish, and Brethren sought renewal through the modes and methods of denominationalism (the roots of which go to the late eighteenth century, but caught up with many Anabaptist groups only later), others sought to attend to "the old order of things."

Denominationalism meant constructed identity in institutional terms and codified legal authority (constitutions and minutes). More formalized means of gaining converts (revival meetings, organized mission work) and Christian educa-

tion (Sunday schools, higher education, publications) were also part of this, and so were more evangelical approaches to worship (meeting-houses, musical instruments in some cases, and money solicitation). In short, this type of renewal meant imitating wider American patterns of religious life built on organization-building and activity.

Old Order proponents, in contrast, advocated renewal by looking to local community life and discipline as regulated and managed by practical inherited custom and what they perceived to be the natural order of life. "Order," or *Ordnung* in this broad sense, is not "progressive" in assuming that human insight is always and necessarily improving over time. *Ordnung* draws on the accumulated wisdom and authority of tradition. *Ordnung* is learned through living it. Bureaucracy, distant authority, and abstracted notions of community are incompatible with a life measured by *Ordnung*. Attention to *Ordnung* means that community and family relations are of primary importance, and maintaining them is of highest priority. Change and innovation always bears the burden of proof, and rarely does it convince Old Orders that it will enhance community and family life.

To be sure, Old Order writers

also commented on things such as the worldly spirit of pride exhibited in dress, fairs, house furnishings, and the like. But other Mennonite, Brethren, and Amish writers also commented on such matters. If the Old Orders drew the line at a different place or made connections between pride of dress and pride of being elected Sunday school superintendent who offered competitive prizes to students, Old Orders were generally in agreement with their non-old order coreligionists in opposing pride, espousing humility, arguing for the simple life, and standing for nonconformity and nonresistance. What set the Old Orders apart was their completely different appraisal of the institutional changes in church life and structure.

Central to Old Order identity was a particular approach to church life and religious experience, not necessarily dissent from technological change or innovation. Indeed, the formation of the Old Orders occurred at a time before many household, communication, and transportation technological innovations emerged as practical. However, given their resistance to institutional change in church life and their understanding of community which did not rely on bureaucracy, codified authority, or organi-



<div> <div>Renewal through denominationalism</div> <div> Amish Mennonite Conferences  Central Conference of Mennonites  (Old) Mennonites  Church of the Brethren </div> </div>	
<div> Old Order Amish  Old Order Mennonites  Old Brethren German Baptists (1939)  Old Brethren (1913) </div>	<div> Beachy Amish (1947)  Wisler Mennonites (1907)  Old German Baptist Brethren  (1881) </div>

Chart 2

zational programming and planning, it is not surprising that Old Orders were often very cautious about adopting new forms of technology that might weaken family and congregational life or undercut local economics and face-to-face communication.

Yet, how Old Order folks sorted out their response to technology and community and family life was uneven. For some it was clear that the sort of Old Order church life they espoused was linked to a way of life threatened by rapid technological change, individual mobility,

and mainstream consumer spending habits. For others, the link was less certain and they took a more practical approach to change. These Old Orders rejected the theoretical rationalization of higher education, church bureaucracy, and religious experience that separated the self from the community, but found some technological change or modification in church discipline necessary and useful in the practical matter of making a living and getting along in life.<sup>17</sup>

The place of technology in all this and its relationship to group identi-

ty and community is somewhat complex. Technology—whether mechanized agriculture or mass communication—does more than simply perform tasks. It also creates significantly new social patterns of interaction or ways of going about life. Often cited are the automobile, public utility electricity, telephones, or tractor farming. Some groups stemming from Old Order roots use these items, while others do not. Moreover, usage or non-usage is not necessarily predictive across technologies. For example, horse-drawn transportation does not imply that

<div> <div> Conservative Menn. Conf. (1910)  Mennonite Biblical Alliance (1999)  "Sharing Concerns" [Salem Menn. Church, etc.] (1981)  Dunkard Brethren (1927)  Mid-West Menn. Fellowship (1977)  Bethel Cons. Menn. Fellowship (1983)  Nationwide Menn. Fellowship (c.1960) </div> </div>		<div> Mennonite Church  General Conference Mennonite Church  Church of the Brethren </div>
<div> Old Order Amish  Old Order Mennonites  Old Brethren German Baptists (1939)  Old Brethren (1913) </div>	<div> Beachy Amish (1947)  Wisler Mennonites (1907)  Old German Baptist Brethren (1881)  Brethren (1913) </div>	

Chart 3



in-home telephone use is taboo. In-home telephone use is out of bounds for Old Order Amish, but not for horse-and-buggy-driving Groffdale Old Order Mennonites (who in Indiana have had in-home telephones since 1973 if lay members, and 1993 among the ordained leaders).

Over the course of the twentieth century these sorts of differences have separated groups in the Old Order tradition. (*See chart 2*)

Note that despite their differences on questions of technology, clothing, and related topics, all of the groups stemming from the Old Order tradition maintain worship styles, approaches to Christian education, and attitudes toward denominationalism and church institutions very much like those that dominated in early nineteenth-century Mennonite, Amish, and Brethren communities. For example, an Old Order Mennonite and Wisler Mennonite church services remain quite similar in format and logic despite the fact that worshipers dress differently, arrived by different means of transportation, and vary in their facility of German. For their part, Old German Baptist Brethren may use a home computer or fly in airplanes, but they refuse to

have Sunday schools, organized mission work, or speak of assurance of salvation—all things which suggest a structure and strategy to being church which they see as modern and unnecessary innovations.

Meanwhile, a somewhat similar sorting out process occurred in this century among the heirs of the nineteenth-century Anabaptist denomination-builders. Just as the Old Orders later faced the implications of what remaining in the “old order” really meant for life outside of specifically church matters, so too did mainline Anabaptists have to deal with the implications of their choices in a changing twentieth century. Their quest for renewal had involved borrowing and adapting insight and models from larger society. In the twentieth century they faced the question of how far such borrowing and adapting would go.

Throughout the 1900s some Mennonites and Brethren have believed that change was occurring too rapidly in their groups, or that imitation of what they saw as “worldly” patterns and practices had gone too far. These groups were not Old Order in their orientation; they had no qualms about denominationalism, and were staunch sup-

porter of Sunday schools, publishing efforts, and formal mission programs. But they were concerned with the way such activities were carried out.

The conservative Mennonite and Brethren groups or congregations which have formed in past decades (e.g., Midwest Mennonite Fellowship, Salem Mennonite Church, or Dunkard Brethren) have accepted the nineteenth-century denominational innovations which the Old Orders rejected, but remained very cautious about their degree of interaction with the dominant society, mass media technology, and patterns of thinking and education which privilege an individual’s search for and construction of meaning over the collective wisdom of the group. From the standpoint of technology, social habits, and often dress, they may tend to resemble the Old Orders, but in terms of church life and structure they do not.<sup>18</sup>

For example, members of both the Wisler Mennonite Church and Nationwide Mennonite Fellowship drive cars, dress similarly, only occasionally go to high school, reject television and radio, have telephones in their homes, and share many other similarities. Yet

<div>Old Order Amish</div> <div>Old Order Mennonites</div> <div>Old Brethren German Baptists (1939)</div> <div>Old</div>	<div>Conservative Menn. Conf. (1910)</div> <div>Mennonite Biblical Alliance (1999)</div> <div>“Sharing Concerns” [Salem Menn. Church, etc.] (1981)</div> <div>Dunkard Brethren (1927)</div> <div>Mid-West Menn. Fellowship (1977)</div> <div>Bethel Cons. Menn. Fellowship (1983)</div> <div>Nationwide Menn. Fellowship (c. 1960)</div> <div>Beachy Amish</div>	<div>Mennonite Church</div> <div>General Conference Mennonite Church</div> <div>Church of the Brethren</div> <div>Brethren in Christ</div>
	<div>Wisler Mennonites (1907)</div> <div>Old German Baptist Brethren (1881)</div> <div>Brethren (1913)</div>	

**Chart 4**



Nationwide Fellowship is not rooted in the Old Order tradition and the Wisler folks are. Nationwide Fellowship has an organized, active, and systematic foreign and domestic mission program, publishing arm, and Sunday school system. Its approach to worship includes four-part congregational singing led by a standing song leader, pass-the-plate offering, and annual revival meetings. The Wisler Mennonites have none of these things. The difference between the groups lies not so much in technology or lifestyle as in their approach to religious life.

There is overlap and continuity, to be sure, but it exists on two different axes, not a single continuum. From one perspective, the Wisler Mennonites would have more in common with the Nationwide Fellowship or Midwest Fellowship churches than with the Old Order horse-and-buggy Mennonites. But from another angle they are much closer to the horse-driving group than to the Nationwide Fellowship churches. (In 1973 many of the Wisler Mennonites in Ohio began to switch affiliation to the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church—a group not present in Michiana, but similar to Nationwide Fellowship or Midwest Fellowship—and adopted the EPMC church institutions and worship practices. For these one-time Wislers, it was a very definite switch from one sort of identity to another even though their mode of dress, entertainment and recreation habits, and use of technology did not really change.

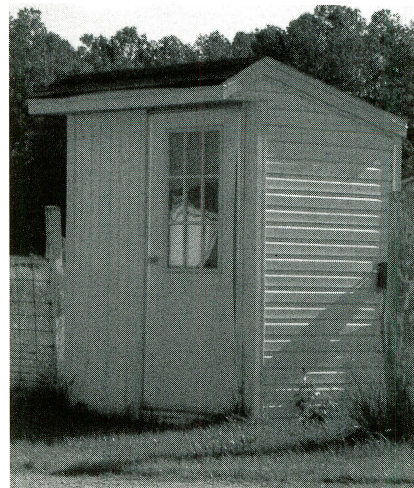
Similarly, in the Brethren tradition, the Old German Baptist Brethren—despite their car-driving and even very occasional college-attendance—in one sense have more in common with the horse-and-buggy Old Brethren German Baptists of Carroll County, Indiana, than they do with Brethren conservatives such as the Dunkard Brethren. Like the horse-and-buggy group, the Old German Baptists reject Sunday schools, revival meetings, paid ministry, missionary

boards, and modification of rituals such as single-mode foot washing which the Dunkard Brethren feel are essential components of their witness to the world.

### Additional observations

Within each of the categories I have suggested here, there are many individual distinctions between groups. Recently, for example, the Pleasant Grove Mennonite Church, near Shipshewana, Indiana, ended its affiliation with the Conservative Mennonite Conference and joined the new Mennonite Biblical Alliance. It did so because it favored the more traditional stance of MBA on matters such as dress and divorce.

It is also important to remember that living Christian communities are dynamic and changing, and that any model must leave open the possibility of movement. One important example of this has been the evolution of the Beachy Amish—nationally, but also with particular importance in the Michiana region. While the early Beachy Amish churches in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Ohio are perhaps best characterized as Old Order-oriented folks who made adaptations in their use of technology and in their practice of discipline, during the 1950s and 1960s that orientation began to change. The original Beachy Amish fellowship absorbed a group of new congregations (locally, Woodlawn Amish Mennonite was the key church) that had a different focus. Rather than modifying an Old Order lifestyle, the community at Woodlawn had a worldview that was much more akin to the nineteenth-century activists who championed Sunday schools, mission work, and other means and methods to spread their message and structure their effectiveness. Under the influence of Woodlawn and similar congregations that emerged from the 1950s “mission interests movement” among the Amish, the Beachy Amish have really left the



*The telephone shack at the end of the lane is one way that Old Order Amish have chosen to limit the effects of this technology. Some Old Order Mennonites in Indiana, however, have had in-home telephones since 1973.*

*Photo by John E. Sharp*

Old Order orbit and became much more like the conservative Mennonite and Brethren groups in the upper center of the model.<sup>19</sup> (See chart 4)

### A common history, a common memory

The multitude of plain churches can be bewildering—even to insider members, not to mention sympathetic outsiders looking in. While the model discussed above is one way I bring order to the potential confusion and sort things in my own mind, we may ask, Is there a larger story here? A larger history?

In general, history is something many plain people care deeply about. For Old Order and conservative Amish, Mennonites, and Brethren their sources of authority and their general orientation to church and life rests on the accumulated wisdom of those who have gone before. For them events of the past, such as taking a stand for a principle or against an innovation, remain important parts of their



identities. Many mainline Mennonites and Brethren, on the other hand, bemused by progresses and the ideal that the future lies ahead of us, may have a disadvantage when tending historical fires.

But what is perhaps stronger among the plain people than among other Anabaptists is not history, but memory. Memory and history are closely related, but they are not the same. History tells us what happened; memory tells us who we are. Good history can be done by an insider or an outsider; memory belongs to the group alone. Individuals can study history; memory is always relational and can never be the solo project of any one person. Memory may not always be accurate, but it is always true—that is, it is always concerned with truth.

The Jewish academic historian Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi has written that, despite his own deep interest in history, he believes that what holds Jews together is a common memory. There is much that he has learned and continues to learn from history, but it is in Jewish memory that his identity rests. In fact, Yerushalmi notes that in a strange way history sometimes destroys memory, as we dissect and pull apart and analyze the past.<sup>20</sup>

That is a risk that I take as a historian. But it is one that I know I am taking, and it reminds me to not lose sight of the larger questions of meaning that stand alongside history—particularly the history of people of faith.

Those questions and larger meanings are what lie at the heart of memory (and faithful history), because memory is about remembering. When we remember we take broken fragments of words, images, and events and put them together into something whole—something that makes sense and has meaning. When we remember we are taking that which is dismembered and joining the members together again. In re-membering our past, we remember who we are.

"Remember who you are," is a

phrase some of us may have heard growing up. My hope is that the churches represented in the model I have sketched here would not only work at their history—which is important—but would also nurture their memory and re-membering. I believe that attention to history and memory will help us to remember who we are in more than one sense of the word. *D*

—Steve Nolt gave this address at the Michiana Anabaptist Historians Fall Meeting, October 23, 1999. Steve is a member of Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Indiana, and teaches history at Goshen College.

## Notes

1. Stephen E. Scott, *An Introduction to Old Order and Conservative Mennonite Groups* (Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 1996).

2. Leonard Gross, trans., "The First Mennonite Merger: The Concept of Cologne," *Mennonite Yearbook, and Directory, 1990-1991* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House), 9.

3. Adams quoted in Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 246-247.

4. Sylvanus C. Breyfogel, ed., *Landmarks of the Evangelical Association, Containing all the Official Records of the Annual General Conferences . . . to the Year 1840; . . . together with important Extracts from . . . the General Conference from 1840 to the Present Time* (Reading, Pa.: Eagle Book Printers, 1888), 34.

5. Niemcewicz, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, 112. Although Niemcewicz was describing the Lutheran and Reformed Pennsylvania Germans who populated the area (there were no German sectarians there at the time), one can still see elements of the costume he described among the most traditional of Old Order Amish groups—the so-called "Nebraska" or "white top" Amish of Mifflin and nearby Counties, Pennsylvania—who have preserved several eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Pennsylvania German clothing styles. See Frederick S. Weiser, "The Clothing of the 'White Top' Amish of Central Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 21

(July 1998): 2-10.

6. John M. Vincent, *Costume and Conduct in the Laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich, 1370-1800* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935), 1, 19, 37-39, 74-95, 133. German Reformed clergy feared the individualism expressed through personal clothing choice, denouncing in 1786 "the sad consequences of display in dress" that threatened community order and opening the possibility that "a stranger on Sundays, or festival days, cannot possibly tell whom he meets."—*Minutes and Letters of the Coetus of the German Reformed Congregations in Pennsylvania, 1747-1792 . . .* (Philadelphia: Reformed Church Publication Board, 1903), 406.

7. John G. Morris, *Fifty Years in the Lutheran Ministry* (Baltimore: James Young, 1878), 95.

8. David H. Focht, *Churches Between the Mountains: A History of the Lutheran Congregations in Perry County, Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1862), 342-361.

9. Bushman, *The Refinement of America*.

10. [David Beiler], "Memoirs of an Amish Bishop," trans. and ed. by John Umble, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 22 (April 1948), 94-115.

11. Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, 313-352.

12. For Mennonites and Brethren who did not chose the Old Order way, but who retained an ideal of plainness nonetheless, the concept had to be redefined. Simplicity became in many ways a "refined plainness" that did not point one backwards, but in a practical and calculated way justified and enhanced one's activist mission in the world. That sort of nonconformity, it seems to me, is always harder—though not impossible—to pass on. It is somehow linked to ideas of betterment and improvement, and it is connected to the idea of *creating* an identity more than *retaining* one. I wonder if the restless nineteenth-century Americans who created a new genteel identity in the name of equality have an echo among converted individuals who promote plainness as a way to church unity. In both cases, identities are assumed to be fluid. And where such fluidity runs is always anyone's guess.

13. The number of groups isn't the only set with fuzzy boundaries; one could well ask where the borders of "Michiana" are, as well. According to records at the Northern Indiana



## Appendix: Plain Groups in Michiana

### Beachy Amish Mennonite

Berea Fellowship (Bremen)  
Clay Street Amish (Bremen)  
Fair Haven (Goshen)  
Hebron Fellowship (LaGrange)  
Maple Lawn (Nappanee)  
Pilgrim Fellowship (Nottawa)  
Southaven (Millersburg)  
Woodlawn Amish Mennonite (Goshen)

### Bethel Conservative Mennonite Fellowship

Bethany Mennonite Fellowship (Millersburg)

### Conservative Mennonite Conference

Griner Conservative (Middlebury)  
Maple City Chapel (Goshen)  
Mount Joy Conservative (Goshen)  
North Wayne (Dowagiac)  
Pine Ridge Conservative (Goshen)  
Riverview (White Pigeon)  
Roselawn Conservative (Middlebury)  
Townline (Shipshewana)

### Dunkard Brethren

Goshen (Goshen)

### Mennonite Biblical Alliance

Pleasant Grove (Goshen)

### Mid-West Mennonite Fellowship

Bethel Conservative (Nappanee)  
North Liberty (North Liberty)

Sandy Ridge (Nappanee)

Shiloh Fellowship (Constantine)

### Nationwide Fellowship Churches

Grace Conservative Mennonite Fellowship  
(Goshen)

### Ohio-Indiana Mennonite Conference

(i.e., "Wisler" Mennonite)

Yellow Creek meetinghouse (Goshen)

Fairview meetinghouse (Nappanee)

### Old Brethren

Goshen (Goshen)

### Old German Baptist Brethren

Yellow Creek (Goshen)

### Old Order Amish

approx. 103 districts (Elkhart-LaGrange-Noble  
Counties settlement)

35 districts (Nappanee region settlement)

### Old Order Mennonite—Groffdale Conference

Blossers meetinghouse (Foraker)

Clearland meetinghouse (Wakarusa)

Yellow Creek meetinghouse (Goshen)

### unaffiliated conservative congregations

Salem (New Paris)

Fairview Amish Mennonite (Nappanee)

South Union Fellowship (Nappanee)

Center for History in South Bend the term "Michiana" was coined in 1935 as part of a Depression-era contest sponsored by South Bend merchants looking for ways to lure Michigan consumers and their spending dollars south of the border. The person who suggested the term "Michiana" received first prize of a new Studebaker car. So much for that term which has migrated out of the consumer world and into the title of the Michiana Anabaptist Historians! See *South Bend Tribune*, 3 January 1935.

14. One might also ask about the meaning and usefulness of parsing Anabaptists into discrete categories when in some cases, at least, there is greater diversity within a given group than between several groups. Each group would have its own explanation for the importance of its being a distinct group and the weight it places on such identification.

15. "Conservative Mennonites (Swiss-high German, Pennsylvania), *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, v. 5, 200.

16. This chart is purposefully not drawn on a continuum with denomi-

nationalism at one end and old order at another. Continua are useful devices for comparing bipolar characteristics in which the quality or quantity of each term decreased proportionately along the continuum and the midpoint occupies a liminal space. However, not all comparisons are bipolar. The differences charted here are differences of kind that do not coexist in a common worldview. They are, to use a popular academic term, two different "paradigms." There are places where continua comparisons are useful, as shown in the other charts, in thinking about how one goes about maintaining an Old Order world view or how one goes about renewal via denominationalism.

17. Goshen College sociologist Tom Meyers has called this distinction the difference between theoretical and practical rationalization.

18. For details on the conservative Mennonite groups, see Scott, *Introduction to Old Order and Conservative Mennonite Groups*, 121-232. On the Dunkard Brethren, see entries in *Brethren Encyclopedia*, vols.

1-3 (1983).

19. Yet the Beachy Amish are not entirely at home among such peers. Others in that camp have an identity staked on differentiation from mainline Mennonites and Brethren, which is somewhat a concern, but less so, for the Beachy Amish.

20. Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 81-103. See also Robert N. Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 152-155, on "communities of memory."



# Managing Mennonite Memory: Archives of the Mennonite Church, 1937-

(Fourth in a Series)

by Dennis Stoesz

In this article I focus primarily on the archival stage of records by looking at how incoming materials are handled at the Archives of the Mennonite Church.

This year, forty-four out of eighty-five collections that came into the Archives were from organizations. In describing these collections I will note the patterns of records management that they rep-

resent. In the archives, these organizational records can be called "record groups" since each make up a distinctive group. In particular I will note anything in these sets of records which will help distinguish which are "inactive" and which can be considered "archival."

It has been this work with incoming collections that has led me to propose a more conscious approach to records management system for the church. This approach includes: (a) working together with each of

the organizations who deposit records at the archives, (b) devising a way to work with "inactive" records, and (c) cataloging the "archival" records, so the organizations and researchers can have easy access to the activity, faith, and heritage found in these organizational archival collections.

## Inactive and Archival Records

Before writing about specific collections, I want to explore the nature of "inactive" and "archival" records.

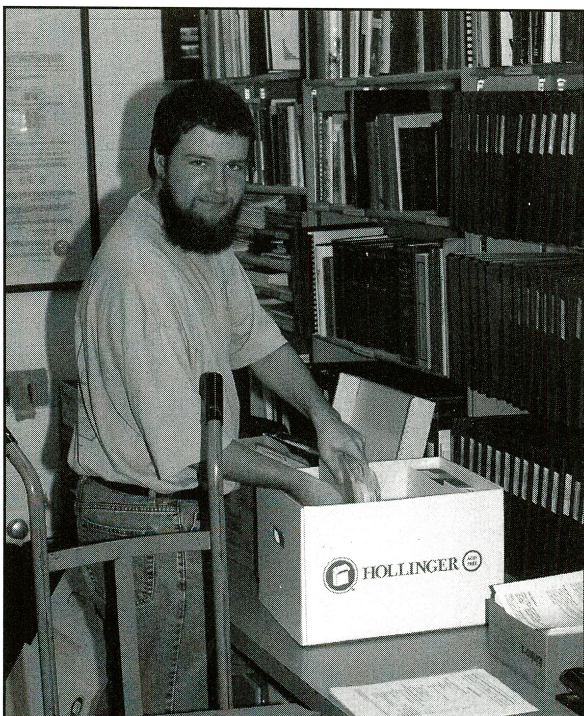
When I think of an archives, I naturally think of old papers that are at least fifty to a hundred years old. In working at the Archives of the Mennonite Church over the last ten years, however, I find that collections can date back as early as 1820 and as recent as 1999. In this age of computers and e-mail, I keep hearing of how electronic files are "archived" every month or at least every half-year after they were created. The past seems to be creeping ever closer to the present.

More often than not, organizational records deposited into the Archives date anywhere from three to thirty years of age. Personal papers on the other hand tend to be much older when they are given to the Archives. They tend to range from twenty to eighty years of age. The reason is that personal papers are usually kept by individuals until they are elderly. And it is often during this senior part of their life that they pass on relevant historical materials to the archives.

Because organizational records are so much younger, it is harder to give clear guidelines on when records are "inactive" or when they become "archival." It is still useful, however, to use these distinctions. Inactive, or semi-active, records are those that are no longer needed for the daily, weekly, or yearly operation of an organization. Archival records are those that are not needed by the organization at all, yet have a secondary, and much broad-

*Kent Holsopple transfers incoming records into large acid-free archival boxes in the Wenger Research Room at the Archives. One of Holsopple's major projects was transferring some archival collections to the new Westlawn Archives Records Center at Goshen College. Holsopple is a history and communications major at Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia, and a native of Goshen, Indiana, who spent the summer of 1999 as an intern and student employee at the Archives.*

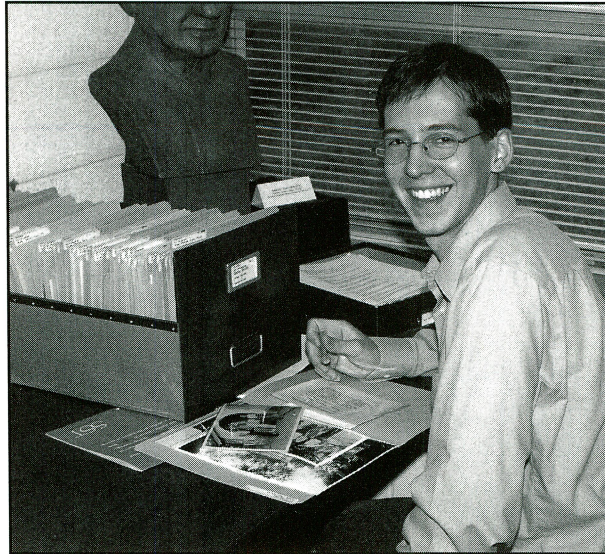
*Photo credit: Dennis Stoesz*





Right: Zach Landis sorts photographs in the Mennonite Central Committee Collection. These prints dated from 1954-1970 and needed to be organized into additional subject categories besides the name of the country in which MCC served. Landis is a history major at Goshen College, and is an intern and work/study student at the Archives.

Photo credit: Dennis Stoesz



er use in that they reflect the long-range activity and heritage of that organization.

## Boards of the Mennonite Church

Thirteen of the collections that came into the Archives in 1999 were from Mennonite Church boards. *The Mennonite Board of Education*, 1905-deposited its 1986-89 central files. This three-year set of files (1986-89) became ten years old and was identified as "archival" in 1999. The Board also deposited its files of the Pastorate Project, 1986-95. Although not yet ten years old, these files were no longer needed because the project had come to an end.

*The Mennonite Board of Missions*, 1906- deposited the 1970-80 files of its Home Missions department. Since 1982 this department has been known as Evangelism and Church Development. *The Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries*, 1971-deposited records from several of its programs: 1980-90 files from Peace and Social Concerns; 1977-92 files from Stewardship; and 1982-94 from its Administration.

Included in all of these six shipments were itemized listings of all the files. Inclusive dates indicating the beginning date and end date of the materials in each file was also included on the file label. A brief

administrative history of the department, and a list of staff who had worked in that department over the years, was included at the beginning of each file list. It is this "Inventory Listing" which then becomes the basis for cataloging each set of records, and for placing them in the appropriate sections within each organization's archival collection.

## Mennonite Board of Education

It is also instructive to compare the first set of files (1986-89) deposited by the Board of Education with the five other sets of records. While all these files were considered "archival" and were ten years old, the first set spanned a three-year time period while the others were ten years in length. This shows how a specific time period can aid organizations in identifying when its files become archival.

The Board of Education has worked hard over the past few years to set clear dates for "inactive" and "archival" files. Earlier the Board had worked with a large quantity of inactive records which dated over a ten to twenty-five-year time-period. This became overwhelming and unmanageable. This large section of inactive records was brought to a realistic size by decid-

ing to work with these records in three-year blocks.

Today the 1997-2000 files are considered current, and are found in accessible filing cabinets. The 1994-97 files are identified as inactive, and are found in accessible filing cabinets in case this information is needed. The 1991-94 files are ready to be archived, and are stored in closets. And the 1989-91 files are archived, and are ready to be sent to the archives at the point when they span a three-year period, 1989-92.

Sandi Bromley, administrative assistant, and Ruth E. Schrock sort the files each year, and transfer a year's-worth of files to the next appropriate section. In July 2000, the 1997-98 files will become inactive and will be transferred to that section. The 1994-95 will get transferred to the closet. And the 1991-92 files will join the 1989-91 batch to be archived.

Bromley will then type out the "Inventory Listing" for the archival files, 1989-92. A copy of this list will be kept in the office so the staff knows what records are at the Archives. Another copy will be sent with the files to the Archives. When these archival records are cataloged, this three-year list of files, 1989-92, will join the other listings of archival records that exist for this Board from 1905-1989. These combined listings become the main access point for researchers to search through the 87 years of archival records on the Mennonite Board of Education.

This is an excellent example of how the categories of current, inactive, and archival records helps manage records well.

## Five Other Boards and Committees

A greater variety of records can be seen in the collections deposited in 1999 by five other boards and committees of the Mennonite Church. Two individuals brought in photographs of the 1929 and the 1939 general conferences. These



were placed in the *Mennonite General Conference, 1898-1971*, Photograph Collection. Today that organization is known as Mennonite Church USA Executive Board, 1999-; earlier it was known as Mennonite Church General Board and General Assembly, 1971-1999.

Photographs on the activities at the Archives from 1990-99 were placed in the *Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, 1911-*, Collection. The John Horsch History Essay Contest Papers from 1994-96 were also added to that collection. Mary K. Oyer brought in her 1988-89 files on the *Hymnal and Hymnal Sampler Project, 1982-1992*. These were placed in the Mennonite Church, Music Committee section, which documents the many hymnals the church has published through the years.

The 1983 postage stamp with the ship Concord, and which commemorates the 300th anniversary of German Immigration to the United States, was placed in the *Mennonite Publication Board, 1908-* Collection. This board published a special church bulletin during 1983 that focused on this stamp and the anniversary, 1683-1983. And finally, the official dockets, 1997-1998, of the Board of Directors for *Mennonite Mutual Aid, 1945-* were deposited in that collection.

These last seven sets of archival records look much different from the first six I mentioned. They date as early as 1929 and as late as 1998, instead of from 1977-95. They were not deposited in regular three-year or ten-year blocks, which demonstrates a less organized management of records.

## Conferences

Three of the collections that came in 1999 were deposited by two conferences. Staff from the *Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1854-* cleaned out some inactive files from 1988-92. Included were some older handwritten minutes from the



Left: Nelda Glick Nussbaum does a preliminary inventory listing of records that came into the archives. This listing provides valuable information toward identifying the kinds of documents found in the collection. Nussbaum serves as a volunteer at the Archives.

Photo credit: Dennis Stoesz

annual conferences, 1969-90. Later in the year the conference deposited its 1993-94 official records. Five years of files are kept in the office, 1994-1999, and each year the oldest year's-worth of materials are taken out of the files and transferred to the Archives. This usually takes place around the annual summer conference.

Some older mission records that belonged to Andrew Levi Glick of the *North Central Conference of the Mennonite Church, 1920-* came to the Archives from Ervie Glick of Harrisonburg, Virginia. This correspondence, 1952-59, reflected Glick's work as president of this North Central District Mission Board. Included with the material were also the "Certificates of Transfer" of church membership, for the years 1946-48.

Again this shows some variation in the management of records. A larger conference office staff should sort through their files annually. Records from a smaller organization are often maintained by a single individual, who may hang on to them for a longer time before transferring them to an archives.

## Mennonite Organizations

Eight "record groups" that came into the Archives in 1999 were from

a variety of Mennonite organizations. The *Mennonite Nurses Association, IN, 1942-* deposited its financial records of 1994-96. That included bank statements, bank books, expense reports, membership records, and correspondence. The *Mennonite Association of Retired Persons, IN, 1989-* deposited its official correspondence files from 1989-98. Included here were also the minutes and correspondence from the earlier organization known as the Inter-Mennonite Council of Aging, 1981-87. In this case the director of the organization was retiring, and so it was an appropriate time to transfer its records to the Archives.

The *Mennonite Health Services, IN, 1947-* deposited a variety of older files which they found after the office was transferred from Pennsylvania to Indiana. It included two sets of project files, 1989-92, and 1992-94, cassette tapes from 1971-97, a video tape from 1988, and photographs from the 1980s-90s. The *Mennonite Health Assembly, 1952-* deposited some more of its official minutes, newsletters, and plaques dating from 1952-94. Included were some photographs, 1981-93 and 1996-98, as well as older booklets, 1947-65. This organization had maintained its own archives for many years, but began transferring



materials to the Archives in the early 1990s. In 1999, they finished transferring materials dating up through 1994.

A former executive secretary deposited records which reflected his 1982-91 involvement in *Mennonite Renewal Services, 1975- .* The secretary of the *Mennonite Aid Association of Indiana and Michigan, 1911-* deposited his two-year's-worth of correspondence and reports, 1996-98. It included information on the organization known as the Anabaptist and Brethren Agency, Inc. A duplicate set of these "Aid Association" documents was also deposited at the Bluffton College Archives, Ohio, which has maintained a Mutual Aid Archives for many years.

*The Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, 1943-* deposited its program files from 1986-97. Included were photographs ranging from the 1940s to the 1990s which had been used in its 50th anniversary history book. And finally, *Precision Audio, 1967-* deposited the audio cassette tapes that it had recorded for a variety of Mennonite conferences held between 1988-97: MEDA convention, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, Ministry of Reconciliation, Breaking Silence, Bringing Hope, Mennonite Health Assembly, and the Conservative Mennonite Conference.

What can one say about the pattern of records management represented by these eight collections? One conclusion is that all these organizations consider their "current" records as anything from one to five years old. So "inactive" and "archival" records can be identified as anything older than one to five years. That seems to provide quite a loose definition and gives quite a latitude to what is considered "old." This, however, seems to hold true for the collections from the conferences and the congregations cited above.

Another conclusion is that orga-

nizations seemed to be less structured in their scheduling of records than the boards of the Mennonite Church records. Most of these records are transferred during transition—office relocation, change of director, or a shift of direction within the organization. Here the same difficulty arises in distinguishing "inactive" from "archival" records as shown previously.

## Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), 1920-

This large organization which serves the broader Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America manages its files through a regular scheduling of records: the latest three years of materials are considered "current," the previous seven years are considered "semi-active," and anything that is older than ten years is "archival." In keeping with this schedule, MCC deposited its official 1987 and 1988 correspondence and report files to the Archives in 1999. This material is found on thirty 16mm microfilm reels. Microfilming its records has been one way MCC has worked at saving costs on storage space.

Several other sets of MCC records were also deposited in 1999.

They included workbooks, minutes, personnel listings, and news releases from 1986-94.

The history and development of MCC's records management system deserves a longer and separate treatment, which will come in a future issue.

## International Voluntary Service (IVS), 1953-

This organization, based in Washington, D.C., began in 1953 as a nonsectarian, nonpartisan agency. In 1997 IVS designated the Archives of the Mennonite Church as its official repository. One of the reasons for this was that a parallel organization, Mennonite Central Committee, had its archival collection located at the archives. That year IVS sent photographs, 1959-93, and program files, 1989-96.

In 1999 IVS's volunteer, Roderick MacRae, added to this collection by depositing his own records in the Archives. It included field records from Laos, 1963-66, and Washington, D.C., 1966-68. It also included materials MacRae collected on IVS's involvement in Cambodia and Vietnam during the 1960s. The rest of the papers reflected MacRae's ongoing collecting of annual reports, newsletters, and information sent out by IVS from

*Martha Heath types an inventory listing of a congregational archives collection into the computer. Heath serves as a volunteer at the Archives.*

*Photo credit: Dennis Stoesz*





1968 to 1996. These records ranging from 1962 to 1996 will make a valuable addition to the IVS collection.

This example illustrates the important contribution that individuals can make toward keeping materials from an organization in which they served. Although these papers could be placed in a personal collection, since they reflect MacRae's own involvement, I felt the range and breadth of the records would warrant placing them in the official organization's collection. MacRae's field records will be clearly identified in the collection as being generated and collected by him.

### Archival Values

In addition to those noted above, twelve collections came in from congregations, and eight collections came from *Goshen College, 1894-*

Space in this article does not allow me to provide a description of these record groups.

I want to conclude by writing specifically about what makes records "archival." There are six values which determine whether a given set of records is "archival." Those values are (a) administrative, (b) fiscal, (c) legal, (d) intrinsic, (e) evidential, (f) and/or informational. If a set of files has some or all of these values, it would justify the long-term preservation of these records. This definition comes from the *Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers*, Society of American Archivists, 1992.

A similar definition of archival values is given in the document entitled *Guidelines for Retention and Disposition of Records . . . for Mennonite Church Boards and Agencies*, 1989. It notes "the determi-

nation of how long records should be retained will be based on a number of factors. Records may be important for legal reasons, for historical and research purposes, and/or for the ongoing administrative and financial functions of the organization. These must all be reviewed in making judgments on retention and disposition of records."

My hope is that we can put meaning behind this definition by developing records schedules that are useful for all of us in managing each of our organization's records through their entire life cycle, from current to inactive / semi-active to archival. *D*

—Denis Stoesz has served as  
archivist since 1989.

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### Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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- STEINER, Albert J. (A.J.)**  
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- STEINER, Clara D. Eby**  
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- STOLTZFUS, Victor**  
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